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Cursings in the Hebrew Bible and in Related Literature

Ban Sik Hong

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Cursings in the Hebrew Bible and in Related Literature

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the various aspects of curses in the Hebrew Bible and related Semitic literatures, and to bring out the relationship and differences between the curses of both sources. The linguistic, ethical, and religious characteristics of curses will be considered.

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APPROVAL

CURSINGS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND IN RELATED LITERATURES

by

BAN SIK HONG

Ban Sik Hong

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A Thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Shalom Hild

Richard H. Gaster

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1961

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A P P R O V A L

F O R E W O R D

This dissertation entitled

In presenting this work I wish to express my sincere

"CURSINGS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND IN RELATED LITERATURES"

past years of study by granting me Fellowships and other

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by

I am especially grateful to Professor Moshe Held who

not only directed me in beginning this study, but also

guided me to its completion with his constructive comments

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

My sincere thanks are also due Professor Frank

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have been a source of strength in the study of my major

field, and in the preparation of this dissertation.

In addition, it was a privilege to receive instruction

from Professors Frank Zimmermann, and William

Chocsky during the last years of my study.

Finally, I shall like to express the guidance

of the late Professor Joseph Reider through the earlier

stages of my study.

Therese A. Gustis

Date April 17, 1961

INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

In presenting this work I wish to express my sincere appreciation to The Dropsie College for making possible these past years of study by granting me Fellowships and other assistance.

I am especially grateful to Professor Moshe Held who not only directed me in beginning this study, but also guided me to its completion with his constructive comments and counsel.

My sincere thanks are also due Professor Frank Zimmermann whose helpful counsel and words of encouragement have been a source of strength in the study of my major field, and in the preparation of this dissertation.

In addition, it was my privilege to receive instruction from Professors Theodor Gaster, Meir Bravmann, and William Chomsky during the last few years of my studies.

Finally, I shall always be appreciative of the guidance of the late Professor Joseph Reider through the earlier stages of my study at Dropsie College.

1. Ancient Sumerian, Egyptian, and Hittite literatures contain various kinds of curse: ANET/pp.327, 353f; G. A. Barton/ The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akkad, pp. 64-65, 106-107, 126-127.
2. A.E. Crawley: "Cursing and Blessing," Ency. of Rel. & Ethics, ed. by J. Hastings, Vol.IV, p. 307; Max Joseph: "Curse", The Universal Jewish Ency., Vol.III, p. 434; Casper Levias: "Biblical Conception of Cursing," The Jewish Ency., Vol.IV, p. 339.
3. Lev. 24:13-23.
4. Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20; 30:11.
5. Lev. 19:14.
6. Eccl. 10:20.
7. Ps. 22:27.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Cursing has been a common occurrence in human society throughout the ages. The practice of cursing was found among the ancient people,¹ and is found even today among the people of the different parts of the world. Since cursing is a common expression of human behavior, it often appears in various forms of writing. In this respect, the Semitic literatures including the Hebrew Bible are no exception. Various kinds of curses are found in the Hebrew Bible and in the other ancient Semitic literatures.

A curse, in general, has been regarded as a wish or declaration the purpose of which is to bring calamity upon its related object.² Since the purpose of a curse is to bring harm upon some-one, a person does not wish to be its object. Naturally, uttering a curse is regarded as an evil act itself. According to the Hebrew Bible, cursing is not to be directed against certain objects. God,³ parents,⁴ and helpless deaf,⁵ are not to be cursed. Neither kings, rich ones,⁶ nor the rulers of the people,⁷ And cursing against the aforementioned objects is regarded as a sin, and can be the cause of serious punishment.

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1. Ancient Sumerian, Egyptian, and Hittite literatures contain various kinds of curse: ANET/pp.327, 353f; G. A. Barton/ The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akkad, pp. 64-65, 106-107, 126-127.
 2. A.E. Crawley: "Cursing and Blessing," Ency. of Rel. & Ethics, ed. by J. Hastings, Vol.IV, p. 367; Max Joseph: "Curse," The Universal Jewish Ency., Vol.III, p. 434; Casper Levias: "Biblical Conception of Cursing," The Jewish Ency. Vol.IV, p. 389.
 3. Lev. 24:13-23.
 4. Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20; 30:11.
 5. Lev. 19:14.
 6. Eccl. 10:20.
 7. Ex. 22:27.

On the other hand, some curses in the Hebrew Bible are employed to promote the declaration of as well as the application of the law of God. Some Biblical curses are spoken to declare God's punishment directed against the breakers of the law or commandments of God.¹ Some are employed to promote by the use of threats the keeping of the law and ordinances of God.² Some are spoken in order to strengthen the idea of solemnity in the promulgation of the law of God.³ Also, the Biblical curse is employed as a part of the ceremony of making an oath before God.⁴ These phenomena indicate that spelling a curse may not be always regarded as a condition of sin, but that some Biblical curses play a part in God's jurisdiction and in the confessional ceremonies of making man's oath before God.

Numerous curses in the Semitic literatures⁵ are spoken for self-protection, namely, the protection of property or of monuments of various kinds. In such cases, the primary aim of spelling of curses is to protect oneself rather than to harm others. In different parts of the world, people employ curses in peace treaties or in making covenants of various kinds in order to promote the fulfilment of the treaties.⁶ Therefore,

1. Gen.3:14-19; 4:10-12; I Sam.3:13-14; II Sam.12:10-12, I Kings 21:10-24. etc.

2. Lev. 26:14-39; Deut. 28:15-69, etc.

3. Deut. 27:15-26, etc.

4. Num. 5:20-22.

5. Ancient Semitic literatures, such as Akkadian, Phoenician, Aramaic sepulchral and building inscriptions.

6. Cf. the chapter of this study entitled, "The Reason or Motive for the Curses."

1. Cf. The section of this study entitled, "Indirect Curses."

uttering a curse may not be regarded as sinning or an evil act, without a proper study of motive or application of an individual curse.

The study of curses will also bring an understanding of the religious or superstitious ideas and the various moral and ethical principles of the people to whom the curses belong. For instance, when, in the Hebrew Bible, a curse is spelled in a form of an appeal or prayer, it is always directed to ^{JHWH}God. Therefore, the monotheistic Hebrew religion is revealed in such a curse. Curses in Akkadian, Phoenician, and Aramaic literatures are directed to various deities according to their polytheistic religious ideas. Those who believe in animism invoke such objects as mountains or trees when they curse.¹

The aim of this study is to investigate the various aspects of curses in the Hebrew Bible and related Semitic literatures, and to bring out the relationship and differences between the curses of both sources. The linguistic, ethical, and religious characteristics of curses will also be considered.

The term, "related literatures," in this study, is not meant to include all the literatures related to the Hebrew Bible, but some of the Semitic literatures that are generally regarded as the earlier sources of extra-Biblical material, namely, Akkadian and Ugaritic literatures, and Phoenician and Aramaic sepulchral and building inscriptions.

1. Cf. The section of this study entitled, "Indirect Curse."

V. The Object C O N T E N T S

A. Human Objects

Abbreviations

B. Animal Objects

I. Reference to the Pertinent Sections

A. Curses in the Hebrew Bible

VI. C. B. Curses in Phoenician and Aramaic Sepulchral and Building Inscriptions

C. Akkadian Curses

D. Ugaritic Curses

II. The Formula of the Curses

A. Typical Form of Curse in the Bible

B. Direct Curse

C. Indirect Curse

D. Conditional Curse

III. The Degrees of Ill Wish in the Curses

A. Various Calamities and Afflictions upon the Life

B. Ill Wishes of Death

C. Ill wishes that deal with the dead body or Sheol, a state after the physical life is finished.

IV. The Reason or Motive for the Curses

A. The declaration of punishments for the violations of the law or commandment of God.

B. The utterance of threats to promote the keeping of the law and the devoted life.

C. To strengthen the Oath

D. For Vengeance

E. For the protection of property

V. The Objects of the Curses

A. Human Objects

B. Animal Objects

C. Inanimate Objects

D. Forbidden Objects

VI. Conclusions

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CHAPTER I.

REFERENCE TO THE PERTINENT SECTIONS

A. Curses In The Hebrew Bible

Genesis 3:14-15; 3:16; 3:17-19; 4:10-12; 9:24-26;
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1. Jer. 17: 5-6.

2. Josh. 6:25; 4. Josh. 9:23; Gen. 3:14, 7-19; 11:9; 25: 49:6-7; Jer. 20:14-17.

3. Deut. 27:17.

4. Deut. 27:19; 34. Wms. 24:19; Deut. 27:15, 16, 18-26; 28:16-19; Jud. 21:18; 1 Sam. 11:24, 25; 26:19; Jer. 11:1; 48:10; Mal. 1:14.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORMULA OF THE CURSE

A. Typical formula of cursing in the Bible.

Among the various forms of curse in the Bible, there is a formula that may be regarded as the typical form of Biblical curse. This form of curse always begins with the word, אָרוּר, Qal part. pass. of אָרַר, "to curse". Then אָרוּר is followed by a description of the reason why the curse is uttered or the object of the curse and ends up with the description of the ill wishes which the curse intends to bring upon the object against which it is spelled. Some curses of the above form, however, do not contain detailed description of the ill wish which would indicate the degree of the curse.

Some examples of the typical form of curse in the Bible are: "cursed is (אָרוּר) the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm ... For he shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, and shall not see when good comes;"¹ "Cursed be (אָרוּר) the man before the Lord, who rises up and builds this city, even Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it;"² "Cursed be (אָרוּר) he who removes his neighbour's landmark;"³ "Cursed be (אָרוּר) he who perverts the justice due to the stranger, fatherless, and widows."⁴

1. Jer. 17: 5-6.

2. Josh. 6:26; 4. Josh. 9:23; Gen. 3:14, 17-19; 4:10; 9:25; 49:6-7; Jer. 20:14-17.

3. Deut. 27:17.

4. Deut. 27:19; cf. Num. 24:9; Deut. 27:15, 16, 18-26; 28:16-19; Jud. 21:18; I Sam. 14:24, 28; 26:19; Jer. 11:3; 48:10; Mal. 1:14.

Every curse that follows this typical form in the Bible, begins with אָרִיר. However, not every curse of this formula contains the same degree of ill wish. In other words, the word אָרִיר can be employed with various ill wishes according to the individual curse. Sometimes אָרִיר stands for lesser ill wishes and sometimes it represents more grievous ones such as death. For example, "Cursed be (אָרִיר) the man before the Lord, who rises up and builds this city, even Jericho; with the loss of his first-born shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."¹

Joshua's curse against Jericho, cited above, indicates the ill wish of death. The death of the first-born son and of the youngest son is the climax of the ill wish in the curse. So אָרִיר in the curse naturally stands for an ill wish of death. "Cursed be (אָרִיר) he who lies with his father's wife: because he has discovered his father's skirt."² This curse does not give a description of the ill wish but only the cause of the curse. So, one may not understand from it exactly how grievous the result of אָרִיר is.³ But through the related Mosaic law: "And the man that lies with his father's wife - he has uncovered his father's nakedness - both of them shall be put to death: their blood shall be upon them."⁴ one may see that אָרִיר represents the ill wish of death in the above curse.

1. Josh. 6:26

2. Deut. 27:20

3. cf. Deut. 27:15-26; 28:16-19, etc.

4. Lev. 20:11.

אָרִיר in the curse of Noah against Canaan stands for the ill wish, namely, to be a servant of servants: "Cursed be (אָרִיר) Canaan: A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."¹ The word אָרִירִים, pl. of אָרִיר, in the curse of Joshua, against the Gibeonites stands for the ill wish, namely to have hard labor: "Now cursed are you (אָרִירִים אֲנִי) and there shall never fail to be of you bondmen, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."² The above curses indicate that the curses that begin with אָרִיר, contain various degrees of ill wish. Therefore, the word, אָרִיר in the curse is to be understood as far as the degree of ill wish is concerned, according to the description of the ill wishes in the curses. In another words, the word אָרִיר represents a state of curse and bears an idea of ill wish in general but it does not indicate the exact degree of the ill wish in a curse, because the degree of ill wish varies according to the description of the individual curse. For example, the form: "Cursed be (אָרִיר) every one who curses you and blessed be (bârūk) every one that blesses you,"³ contains two different forms. One is a form of ill wish, namely, cursing, and the other is a form of well wish, a blessing. According to the above example, one may not understand how bad the cursing is ~~bad~~ how good the blessing. However, the ill wish and the well wish are understood in the formula without any supplementary explanations.

1. Gen. 9:25.

2. Josh. 9:23.

3. Gen. 27:29; cf. Num. 24:9; etc.

3. Deut. 27:17.

The word אָרַר represents the action or state of curse. *However*, every curse need not contain אָרַר or any other word that bears a similar meaning to that of אָרַר. For example, many of the imprecatory Psalms are spelled in the form of an appeal or prayer and do not employ such a term as אָרַר. In case a curse is uttered on a conditional basis, it does not employ, in most cases, the term אָרַר or a similar word: "If I lifted up my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate: Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade, and my arm be broken from the bone."¹ Numerous curses of a similar category are found in the related literatures, namely, Phoenician and Aramaic building and sepulchral inscriptions; Ugaritic and Akkadian myths including the Code of Hammurabi; and various other Akkadian inscriptions, such as kudurru-s and memorial-tablets, cylinder and royal inscriptions, etc. A special characteristic of the typical formula is the putting of אָרַר at the beginning of the curse. Putting אָרַר at the beginning of the curse gives the idea of exclamation,² since, אָרַר emphasizes the grievous condition of the cursed one. The ordinary form would be: "He that removes his neighbor's landmark is cursed," instead of "cursed is he that removes his neighbor's landmark."³

The usual form of exclamation in the Hebrew Bible is indicated by such particles as אֵי, אֵל or אֵלֶּה. These part-

1. Job. 31:21-22.

2. B D B, p. 76.

3. Deut. 27:17.

icles are placed at the beginning of sentences.¹ A similar formula of exclamation or interjection is found in the description of the sorrowful state. The words, וְאֵי or וְהֵי are used to indicate interjection for sorrow: "Woe (וְהֵי) unto them that call evil good, and good evil: That make darkness out to be light, and light darkness; That make bitter out to be sweet, and sweet bitter;"² "Woe (וְאֵי) unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness."³

Both the form of the declaration of woe and the typical form of the curse are similar. In some cases, וְהֵי is used as the preparatory word for a declaration of judgment⁴ as וְהֵי אֵי is often used. However, these two forms are different in their nature and function. וְהֵי or וְאֵי are used as interjections for a sorrowful condition, sometimes in a sense of lamentation.⁵ And sometimes, the word וְהֵי is used for arousing attention with a touch of sympathy or pity.⁶ The words hoy or וְאֵי are never followed by any description of an ill wish, which should come to pass, but are simply an exclamation for the sorrowful condition which already exists. However, contrary to the function of hoy or וְאֵי, when the word וְהֵי אֵי appears in the typical form of curse, an ill wish is understood. וְהֵי אֵי is a term that represents a kind of ill wish that should come to pass against the cursed object.

1. Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, p.471; cf. Joel 1:18; Gen.26:9; Ps.73:18; Isa. 1:21; Num24:5; II Sam 6:20, etc.

2. Isa.5:20, cf. Isa.5:8,11,21,22; 10:1; 17:12;18:1;28:1;29:1,15;30:1;31:1; Jer.22:13;23:1;48:1;50:27;Ezk.13:3,18; 34:2; Amos 5:18; 6:1, etc.

3. I Sam 4:8; cf. Prov.23:29; Isa.3:9,11;6:5; 24:16; Jer.4:13;6:4;10:19; 13:27; Ezk.16:23; 24:6,9; 9:12; etc.

4. Isa. 10:5; 17:12; 28:1, etc. *Has.*

5. I Kings 13:30; Jer.22:18; 34:5, etc.

6. B D B, p.223; Isa.55:1; Zech.2:10,11; Jer.47:6, etc.

In parallel to this typical form of curse, a similar form of exclamation is found in the description of blessing or a happy state. The words standing in opposition to אָרוּר are בָּרוּךְ, and אֲשֶׁר, "happiness or blessedness": "Blessed is (בָּרוּךְ) the man that trust in the Lord, and whose trust is the Lord. For he shall be as a tree planted by the water, and that spreads out its roots by the river;"¹ "Happy is (אֲשֶׁר) he that considers the poor: The Lord will deliver him in the day of evil."²

As has already been noted, the typical form of curse in the Bible always begins with אָרוּר, but never with אָקֵס, although the word אָקֵס, does appear frequently in the Bible in connection with an idea of cursing. The unique appearance of אָרוּר in the typical form of curse points to the fact that there is difference between אָרוּר and אָקֵס.

The root אָרוּ appears in the Bible in several different conjugations, but its meaning, to curse, is the same in all of them,³ and it has never been understood otherwise. A cognate to Hebrew אָרוּ is the Akkadian 'arārum "to curse". Both the verb 'arārum⁴ and the noun arratum/erretum⁵ are common in Akkadian literature. For example, "ḥaṭṭašu lišbir šīmātišu līrur (May he (Anum) break his scepter, may he curse his fate);⁶" "zēršu māssu šabīšu nišīšu u ummānšu erretum maruštam⁷ līrurū

1. Jer. 17:7-8; cf. Ps. 1:1ff; 118:1-2; etc.

2. Ps. 41:2

3. Jud. 5:23; (Qal); Mal. 3:9; (Niph.); Gen. 5:29; (Piel);

4. See von Soden, AHW, p. 65.

5. See von Soden, op. cit., p. 70; ibid., p. 244.

6. Epilogue of C H, XXVI: 50-52.

7. M. Held takes אָקֵס אָרוּ, as a synonym to erretum/maruštum:

J A O S LXXIX (1959), p. 173, n. 82.

(May the gods of heaven and earth) curse his seed, his country, his soldiers, his people and his army with an evil curse.)"¹

The semantic equivalents of Akk. ararum and Heb. אָרַר are אָרַר in Aramaic/Syr. اَرَر in Arabic.

The root *סס* on the other hand bears, by no means, the meaning, to curse, as its sole or predominant connotation. In Qal. *סס*, has various meanings: To be worthless;² to be abated (waters);³ to be swift;⁴ to despise, show contempt, as a synonym to *זָזַל* and as an opposite term to *כָּבֵד*, "to honor".⁵ In the Niphal, *סס* has similar meanings to that of the Qal, but only in a passive or reflexive sense. For example, to be vile, as a synonym to the idiom, *הָיָה עָפָס*⁶; to be slight (in the healing of a wound).⁷ In the Hiphil, *סס* also bears similar meanings to that of the Qal, but in causative sense. For example: to make light, show contempt, in opposition to the idea of honoring;⁸ to make light a cargo of a boat;⁹ to ease (punishment or hardship);¹⁰ and *הָקַס*, in opposition to *הִכְבִּיד*,¹¹ etc. Even in the Piel or Pual,¹² *סס*, can hardly be rendered "to curse" as such (*אָרַר*).¹³

1. Epilogue of C H, XXVIII:78-83; cf. already erretam mar-
uštam līruršu in an inscription of Kudur-Mabuk (R A, 11,
p. 92, II:24-25).
2. Nah. 1:14; Job 40:4, etc.
3. Gen. 8:8, 11.
4. II Sam. 1:23; Jer. 4:13; Hab. 1:8; Job 7:6; 9:25.
5. I Sam. 2:30.
6. II Sam. 6:22.
7. Jer. 6:14.
8. Isa. 8:23; Ezek. 22:7; etc.
9. Jon. 1:15.
10. Ex. 18:22; I Sam. 6:5.
11. I Kings 12:10; II Ch. 10:4; 10:9, 10.
12. Gen. 12:3, (*אֲבָרְכָה אֶתְּרַבְּךָ וְאֶתְּאָרְכָה אֶתְּאָרְךָ*); Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9;
24:14, 23; II Sam. 16:5; I Kings 2:8; Isa. 8:21; Jer. 15:10, etc.
13. See most recently H.L. Ginsberg, Mazar Festschrift (Jeru-
salem, 1958), pp. 62, 64; cf. particularly Ex. 21:17 *מִית יָמֶיךָ*
with Dt. 27:16, *אֶרֶר וְאֶבְיוֹר וְאֶבְיוֹר וְאֶבְיוֹר*.

The above references show the basic difference between אָרר and קָלַל . Namely, אָרר has no other meaning than to curse, while קָלַל , may be related to the meaning, to curse, only in a secondary sense. The word אָרר is never applied to God in the Bible, directly or hypothetically while קָלַל can be used in connection with God. For example, $\text{אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִקְלַל וְנִשְׂיָא בְּעֵנֶיךָ לֹא תֵאָדָר}$.¹ Here אָרר and קָלַל stand as synonyms but אָרר is used for men while קָלַל is used for God; also $\text{אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי-יִקְלַל אֶלְהֵינוּ וְנִשְׂאָ חֹטְאֵנוּ}$.² The avoidance of using of אָרר against God indicates that the word is so grievous that it is not to be applied to God.

Another significant piece of evidence that distinguishes אָרר from קָלַל is the fact that while אָרר is used to express the idea of cursing for a punishment caused by either אָרר or קָלַל , קָלַל is never used in a punitive conclusion caused by אָרר ; for example: $\text{אֲבִרְכֶּה וְאֶבְרַכְיָה וְאֶקְלָשָׁה אֶתְּךָ}$ (I will bless those who bless you, and curse him that despises you);³ $\text{אֲרִירְיָה אֶרְיוֹר}$ (cursed are those who curse you and blessed are those who bless you);⁴ $\text{וְאֶבְרַכְיָה בְּרִיךְ}$ (blessed are those who bless you and cursed are those who curse you).⁵

The above examples indicate the degrees of grievous condition in the application of the words אָרר and קָלַל . Namely, אָרר is grievous enough to express punishment caused by both קָלַל and

1. Ex.22:27: Note the " $\text{יִקְלַל וְנִשְׂיָא}$ " in I Sam.3:13; I Kings 21:10; Ps. 10:3, etc.

2. Lev. 24:15

3. Gen. 12:3.

4. Gen. 27:29.

5. Num. 24:9.

אָר, but קָס is not grievous enough for אָר.

The characteristics of אָר, thus observed, indicate that אָר is the most serious term representing the Biblical idea of cursing. אָר may be directed against definite objects and sometimes against indefinite objects. Thus, the curses of God against the serpent and Cain;¹ Noah's curse against Canaan,² and Joshua's curse against the Gibeonites³ are exclaimed by אָר, and take the definite object. These curses are fixed forms in which אָר can never be replaced by any form of the root קָס.

On the other hand they are not mere wishes which may or may not come to pass, but are solemn and grievous declarations. When these curses say, אָרְךָ, an inescapable grievous condition of the cursed is understood. This grievous implication in the curses may be regarded as a direct influence of אָר.

This is true also in cases where אָר is directed against an indefinite object. For example, the curses "Cursed is (אָרְךָ) he who dishonors his father and his mother; cursed is (אָרְךָ) he who removes his neighbor's landmark,"⁴ are directed against an indefinite object. However, the grievous application of אָר in the above curses are similar to those of אָר in the curses which take a definite object, and even in these cases אָר can not be replaced by any form of the root קָס.

1. Gen. 3:14; 4:11.

2. Gen. 9:25.

3. Jos. 9:23.

4. Deut. 27:16-17.

The usage of אָרוּר, to exclaim a curse, is uniquely characteristic of אָרַר, for neither קָלַל nor any other word that has the meaning of curse ever appears in such an exclamation. In other words, by אָרוּר itself, a cursed state is implied without a corresponding description of an ill wish. As a matter of fact, many typical forms of curses in the Bible are exclaimed by אָרוּר, but have no corresponding description of an ill wish that would indicate detailed degrees of the curses: "Cursed is (אָרוּר) he who gives a wife to Benjamin;"¹ "Cursed is (אָרוּר) the man who eats any food until it be evening;"² "Cursed is (אָרוּר) he who does the work of the Lord with a slack hand: Cursed be (אָרוּר) he who keeps back his sword from blood".³

The above curses have no corresponding descriptions that would indicate the degree of ill wishes intended in the curses. However, no one can deny that a grievous idea is inherent in the curses having אָרוּר alone. What then, is the exact meaning of אָרוּר? It is hard to say just how grievous אָרוּר is, in a curse formula without an explicit ill wish. According to some Biblical curses, as has already been observed, אָרוּר can denote various degrees of ill wishes. For example, Joshua's curses against Jericho on the one hand and his curse against the Gibeonites on the other are introduced by אָרוּר; but each bears a different degree of ill wish: "Cursed is (אָרוּר) the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city, even Jericho; with the loss

1. Jud. 21:18

2. I Sam. 14:24

3. Jer. 48:10; cf. Deut. 27:15-26; 28:16-19; Jer. 11:3; Mal. 1:14.

of his first-born shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it;"¹
 "Now therefore you are cursed (אָרוּרָאָם), and there shall never fail to be of bondmen, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."² It is quite obvious that the first אָרוּר carries the ill wish of death while the second is much less severe, having to do with hard labor only.

As to the meaning of קָלַל, there must be a clear distinction, between the verb קָלַל and the noun קָלָלָה. While it is true that קָלַל occurs several times, in the Bible, as the antonym of בִּירַךְ,³ the normal pair is not בִּירַךְ/קָלַל but rather אָרוּר/בִּירַךְ. In other words, אָרוּר is the basic term meaning "to curse" while קָלַל is at best secondary and would seem in no way to be as severe as אָרוּר. Such a conclusion is supported by Akkadian usage. It is inconceivable, for example, that Hammurabi would introduce his long list of curse by gullulu.

Such Biblical passages as Gen. 12:3 אַבְרָהָם וְבָרַכְתָּ וְלֹא קָלַלְתָּ אֵת אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָם are significant. Note that the Hebrew text has here clearly אֵל and not אֱלֹהִים! This would seem to indicate that originally there is a distinction between the two terms. Note also that the Balaam story employs אָרוּר/בִּירַךְ⁴ but never קָלַל/בִּירַךְ. This would seem to indicate again that אָרוּר is the severe curse, not קָלַל. Balaam invites Balaam not קָלַל but rather אָרוּר! On the other hand, references to the same story in other Books of the Bible employ קָלַל and not אָרוּר. This cannot be an accident.

1. Jos. 6:26.

2. Jos. 9:23

3. Ps. 62:5; 37:22; 109:28.

4. Num. 22:6, 12, etc.

Note particularly Josh. 24:9 **לֹא־אֶתְּרָם**,¹ Josh. does not dare to employ **אָרַר** although he is referring to the story which has only **אָרַר** and never **קָלַל**. It would seem therefore, that he is well aware of the fact that the two terms are distinctly different.

In the story of God's cursing the earth because of men, the word **אָרַר** is used: **אֲרִירָה הָאֲדָמָה**.² And the same was repeated in the story of Noah using also **אָרַר**.³ However, when the same incident is mentioned in the story of the flood, **קָלַל** is used:

**וְאֵלֹהִים קָלַל אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה בְּעִבּוּר הָאָדָם כִּי יֵצֵא
 מִן־הָאָדָם נֶעַם מִנִּי וְלֹא־אֶסְפָּף עוֹד שְׂפָכוֹת אֶת־קַשְׁ-חַי
 פֶּאֶסֶר עֲשִׂיתִי**.⁴ The clause, I will not again curse

the ground any more for man's sake, refers to **אֲרִירָה הָאֲדָמָה** in Gen. 3:17, and does not refer to the destruction of the living creatures by the flood, because the second half of the sentence that follows the above clause, refers to the flood destruction: "Neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."⁵ The easy explanation would be to assume that **קָלַל** in the above example stands for **אָרַר** in Gen. 3:17, and that the two terms are identical. Note, however, that in Gen. 8:21 the Lord is favorably inclined towards man⁶ and **קָלַל** not severe **אָרַר**, is expected.

1. Cf. also Deut. 23:5-6; Neh. 13:2.

2. Gen. 3:17.

3. Gen. 5:29.

4. Gen. 8:21.

5. *ibid.*

6. See W. Cassuto, Genesis, II(1949), p.67.

The picture is different however, with regard to the noun קִלְסָה . One must admit that קִלְסָה is the common term for curse Hebrew while מַאֲרָה ¹ is rare and poetic only. Hebrew differs in this respect from Akk. In the latter, *erretum* (*arratum*) is the common word for "curse", as *arārum* is the common verb for "to curse". However, we have to admit that *erretum* = Heb. קִלְסָה as can be seen from a comparison of Akk. *erretum maruštum*² with the Hebrew idiom מַאֲרָה נִמְרָצֶת קִלְסָה נִמְרָצֶת ³ not מַאֲרָה נִמְרָצֶת .

This day; that all these curses (קִלְסָה) shall come upon you and over-take you: Cursed (קִלְסָה) shall you be in the city, and cursed (קִלְסָה) shall you be in the field. Cursed (קִלְסָה) shall be your basket and your kneading-trough. Cursed shall be (קִלְסָה) the fruit of your body ... Cursed (קִלְסָה) shall you be when you come in, and cursed (קִלְסָה) shall you be when you go out."²

The term קִלְסָה is used for the above mentioned curses as well as the long descriptions of the curses that follow in the same chapter. The term קִלְסָה here stands in opposition to the word בְּרָכָה , which represents a series of blessings which are found in the earlier part of the same epilogue.³ Just as the curses would come upon them (the people) if they would reject and not obey the commandments and statutes of God, so the bless-

1. Deut. 28:20; Mal. 2:2; 3:9; Prov. 3:33; 28:27.
2. CH. XXVIII:82-83. For other examples see already Delitzsch, H W B, pp.137 f.; *ibid.*, p. 428.
3. I Kings 2:8. See most recently M. Held, J A O S, meaning 79 (1959), p. 173.

1. Deut. 7:12-16; 8:1-20; 11:26-28; 28:1-6; 28:15-19; Jer. 17:3; Mal. 2:2; Psa. 119:21, etc.
 2. Deut. 28:15-19.
 3. Deut. 28:1-6; cf. Gen. 27:12.

Moreover, the idea of blessing and cursing in connection with the law of God is related to obeying or rejecting the law; cursing for rejecting the law and blessing for obeying it.¹ In the epilogue to the great body of the ceremonial and civil laws, described in the Book of Deuteronomy chapters 11-28, the word

נִסְּפָה represents the many curses that contain אִרְכָּא: "If you will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day; that all these curses (אִרְכָּא נִסְּפָה) shall come upon you and over-take you. Cursed (אִרְכָּא) shall you be in the city, and cursed (אִרְכָּא) shall you be in the field. Cursed (אִרְכָּא) shall be your basket and your kneading-trough. Cursed shall be (אִרְכָּא) the fruit of your body ... Cursed (אִרְכָּא) shall you be when you come in, and cursed (אִרְכָּא) shall you be when you go out."²

The term נִסְּפָה here is used for the above mentioned curses as well as the long descriptions of the curses that follow in the same chapter. The term gelālōth here stands in opposition to the word בִּרְכָּה, which represents a series of blessings which are found in the earlier part of the same epilogue.³ Just as the curses would come upon them (the people) if they would reject and not obey the commandments and statutes of God, so the blessings would come upon them if they would obey them.

אִרְכָּא is another word in the Hebrew Bible that bears the meaning of cursing. אִרְכָּא occurs only in the Qal and its meaning

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1. Deut. 7:12-16; 8:1-20; 11:26-28; 28:1-6; 28:15-19; Jer. 11:3; Mal. 2:2; Psa. 119:21, etc.
 2. Deut. 28:15-19.
 3. Deut. 28:1-6; cf. Gen. 27:12.

is understood as, "to utter a curse against", However, the occurrences of קָבַר in connection with cursing are far fewer than קָרַח or קָסַס, and קָבַר is never used in the typical curse formulas in the Bible. In meaning קָבַר seems closer to קָסַס than to קָרַח. However, neither its etymology nor its relationship to קָבַר¹ are well established.

Semantically, if not etymologically, קָבַר is very close to Akk. qabû. Note particularly such Akk. idioms as lemuttu qabû² which is the antonym of damiqtu qabû³. The semantic development of qabû "to speak" - "to speak evil, despise" is not far to seek. Note, on the one hand, Akk. awatum⁴ Ugaritic hwt⁵ "word, speech" = Heb. ~~אָמַר~~ / הָוָה "bad report"⁶, and on the other hand, the belief in the Ancient Near East concerning the magic power of a spoken word (good) or evil.⁷

Like קָסַס, קָבַר occurs a few times as the antonym of קָרַח in the following passages: וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלָק אֶל-בְּלָעַם בְּנֵי-קֵדָה לֹא תִקְרְבוּ אֵלַי וְלֹא תִבְרֹכֵנוּ

(and Balak said to Balaam: Neither utter evil against them nor bless them at all); וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלָק אֶל-בְּלָעַם לֵקֵב אֶת-יְהוָה וְקִרְבָּתוֹ יִבְרָכֵנוּ⁸

(and Balak said to Balaam: I called you to utter evil against mine enemies, and behold, you have blessed them altogether.)⁹

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1. See most recently Koehler - Baumgartner, Lexicon, p. 631.
 2. See already Delitzsch, H W B, pp. 577 f.
 3. See C A D, Vol. III, pp. 644 ff.
 4. Von Soden, A H W, pp. 89 f.
 5. Gordon, Ugaritic Manual, p. 258, No. 548
 6. Isa. 47:11 and particularly Ex. 7:26. Note that הָוָה has nothing to do with Arabic hawa "to fall": contrast to Bib. Lexicons.
 7. See Cassuto, Genesis, II, p. 87.
 8. Num. 23:25.
 9. Num. 24:10, also Num. 22:11-12; Prov. 11:26. W. Albright takes קָבַר as "to curse" "The Oracles of Balaam" J B L, LXIII, p. 212.

From the Balak and Balaam story we may perhaps infer that קִבַּל is much closer in meaning to קָלַל than to אָרַר . Nor the following passage: "And he took up his parable, and said: From Aram Balak brings me, the king of Moab from the mountains of the East: come curse for me ($\text{אָרַרְהוּ לִי} \text{) Jacob etc. How shall I utter evil against whom the Lord has not uttered evil ($\text{מֵהָאָרָר} \text{)}$ " $\text{לֹא קִבַּלְתָּ אֵלַי}^1$. It is interesting to note that Balaam quotes Balak employing אָרַר ;² however, he himself employs קִבַּל and not אָרַר ! In other words, Balaam seems to be aware of the fact that קִבַּל , like קָלַל , is not as severe as אָרַר .$

This form of curse frequently appears in the Bible. Biblical curses of this category appear in two different ways. One way is that which contains the word אָרַר and the other is without אָרַר , or any other word that has the meaning of curse, for example: "Because you did this, cursed be you ($\text{אָרַרְתָּ אֶתְּךָ} \text{)}$ more than all cattle and all wild beasts. On your belly shall you crawl and dust shall you eat all the days of your life";² And to the woman he said, I will make very great your pain in child-bearing; in vain shall you bear children. Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."³

Both of these are to be regarded as forms of the direct curse, but the former contains אָרַר , while the latter doesn't. The nature and function of אָרַר in the curse are discussed in

1. Num. 23:7-8.

2. *ibid*; 7. Note, however, that the story also employs קִבַּל when quoting Balak but such quotations seem to have been edited! *cf.* Lev. 24:11 (edited!); see Geiger, *Urschrift*, p. 274.

3. Gen. 3:16-17. Also, Gen. 4:10-11; Joshua 9:23; Mal 3:9

4. Gen. 3:16. Also II Kings 1:3-4; I Kings 21:19-24, etc.

B. Direct curse.

The curse that is invoked directly against an object by the speaker, without appealing to any third party for the fulfilment of the curse, may be regarded as a direct curse. A common form of curse is a wish or appeal to a third party, namely, a supernatural power for the fulfilment. Some regard this form of curse as a prayer.¹ A direct curse, however, is not a form of wish or appeal, but is a direct declaration of a cursed state or a sentence through which the ill wish in the curse is to be fulfilled.

This form of curse frequently appears in the Bible. Biblical curses of this category appear in two different ways. One way is that which contains the word רָרַךְ and the other is without רָרַךְ , or any other word that has the meaning of curse, for example: "Because you did this, cursed be you (רָרַךְ אַתָּה) more than all cattle and all wild beasts. On your belly shall you crawl and dust shall you eat all the days of your life";² "And to the woman He said, I will make very great your pain in child-bearing; in pain shall you bear children. Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."³

Both of these are to be regarded as forms of the direct curse, but the former contains רָרַךְ , while the latter doesn't. The nature and function of רָרַךְ in the curse are discussed in the previous section of this study, "The typical form of curse

1. James Strahan, "The Book of Job", p. 263; T. Canaan, "The Curse in Palestinian Folklore", JPOS, XV, p. 238; cf. Cassuto, Genesis, II, p. 87.

2. Gen. 3:14-15. Also, Gen. 4:10-11; Joshua 9:23; Mal 3:9

3. Gen. 3:16. Also II Kings 1:3-4; I Kings 21:19-24, etc.

in the Bible". רָרַךְ as was observed, represents the action or state of cursing, and when רָרַךְ appears at the beginning of a form of curse, it emphasizes the cursed state. However, it would be hard to assume that a curse that contains רָרַךְ is stronger or more serious than the other, because the degree of a curse should be judged by the nature of the ill wish in the curse. Some regard the curse that contains the wish for the death of its object, as the greatest curse.¹

The Characteristics of the direct curse may be described as follows:

(1) In the first place, a direct curse involves two parties: The speaker of the curse and the object of the curse. The speaker addresses the curse directly to its object without referring to God or gods, or appealing to the power of a third party. The speaker, in a direct curse, appears to be the one who not only utters the curse but brings the calamity, described in the curse, upon the object through his own power. This form of curse differs from the most common form of curse; namely the form of an appeal or prayer containing a divine name or names, which draws down divine disfavor, i.e., adversity, as the case might require.²

The speaker of a direct curse in the Bible, therefore, in most cases, is God Himself. The curses against the Serpent, the Woman, Adam, and Cain³ are some examples of curses spoken by God

1. T. Canaan: op.cit., p. 275.

2. T. K. Cheyne: "Blessing and Cursing", Encyclopedia Biblica, p. 591. The majority of curses in Akkadian and North-Semitic Inscriptions are in the form of an appeal employing the names of deities.

3. Gen. 3:14-15, 16, 17-19; 4:10-12.

directly against the objects. When God is the speaker the form is always that of the direct curse because God never appeals to any third party for the fulfilment or application of His curse. The speaker of the direct curse, however, is not always God. Sometimes such a curse is invoked by a man who speaks for God as His messenger by using the phrase: "Thus said the Lord", or by a man as the independent author of the curse, for example, "But the angel of the Lord spoke to Elijah the Tishbite: Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel, that you go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus says the Lord: You shall not come down from the bed whither you have gone up, but shall certainly die;'"¹ "And Joshua summoned the (Gibeonites) and said to them; Wherefore have you deceived us by saying: We live very far from you, when you are really living among us? Now, therefore, you are cursed, never shall you cease providing slaves hewers of wood and drawers of water for the temple of my God."²

Thus the principal author of the direct curse in the Bible is God, because God alone has the power to bring any form of calamity upon whomsoever He wishes. However, as the above examples show, certain classes of men such as priests, prophets, or bearers of divine office are also regarded as capable of uttering such powerful words.³ When the prophet Elijah cursed the captain of the

1. II Kings 1:3-4. Also I Kings 21:19-24; II Sam. 12:10-12.

2. Joshua 9:22 also Gen. 9:25.

3. E. Westermarck, "The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas", Vol. I, p. 563; Westermarck, "Wit and Wisdom of Morocco", pp. 259-260.

fifty, he did not employ the form of the direct curse, but indicates the power of the spoken word of the man of God: "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from Heaven, and consume you and your fifty. Then fire came down from Heaven, and consumed him and his fifty."¹

A similar idea is found in the case of Balaam. Balak and his people asked Balaam to curse the Israelites for their own benefit. This petition, of Balak to Balaam, is an expression of their faith that Balaam's curse would have power to bring evil upon the Israelites because Balaam was a bearer of the prophetic office.² This idea is also found among the people of primitive Israel and ancient nations as Max Joseph observes: "Originally the use of the curse was based upon the belief in the magic effect of the spoken word. Divine beings, and especially gifted men such as wizards and priests, who were credited with magic power because of their contact with deities, were held to be able to influence for good or evil the fate of those who received their blessing or curse. Primitive Israel shared this belief in common with the rest of the nations of antiquity."³

(2) Secondly, the direct curse is a declaration of the cursed state of a definite object. The speaker and the object of the curse are always definite rather than indefinite.⁴ There are curses that are not directed to any particular object, and there are also curses that are spoken in a form of an appeal or wish

1. II Kings 1:10.

2. Numbers 22:2-7. W. F. Albright regards Balaam as a diviner. "The Oracles of Balaam", JBL, LXIII, p.231,233.

3. M. Joseph, "curse" UJE, Vol. IV, p.434; cf also J.Trachtenberg, "Jewish Magic and Superstitions", p. 58.

4. God's curses against the serpent, woman, Adam and Cain are in the same form; cf Gen. 3:14-15,16,17-19; 4:10-12, etc.

and their fulfilment is not as definite as that of the direct curse.

"Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.....For he shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, and shall not see when good comes;"¹ "Cursed is he that takes a bribe to slay an innocent person."² These are examples of the typical form of curse in the Bible. These curses do not have any definite object. They are to be applied to any object that deserves the curses. Therefore, these are just a form of curse rather than the actual declaration of a cursed state in regard to any particular object.

When a curse is in the form of an appeal or prayer employing the power of God or gods, the curse may be regarded as a wish rather than a declaration of an actually cursed state: "May He (God) incite death against them. Let them go down alive into the nether-world;"³ "O God, be not far from me; O my God, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and confusion that seek my hurt."⁴ These curses indicate that the speaker of the curses merely appeals to God for their fulfilment. And he himself is not in a position to fulfil the curses, therefore the curses are to be regarded as mere wishes.

In contrast to the above forms of curse, the direct curse is a description of reality; the declaration of a cursed state.

1. Jer. 17:5-7.

2. Deut. 27:25.

3. Psa. 55:16.

4. Psa. 71:12-13.

For example, when God cursed the serpent: "On your belly, ^{shall} you crawl and dust shall you eat all the days of your life,"¹ it does not mean that God just wishes the serpent to go on his belly and eat dust. Also, it does not leave any doubt whether the ill wish in the curse may or may not come true, but indicates that God declares the real application of the curse against the serpent. Therefore the application or fulfilment of the curse is real, is related to a particular object, and is certain to occur.

(3) Thirdly, the direct curse is similar to the prophecies of woe as far as the form and the ill wish are concerned. The woe prophecy is a prediction of an ill fate spoken by men in the name of God. In most cases, the woe prophecies begin with the phrase "Thus said the Lord." Then the men of God continue the prophecies in first person in the place of God. Sometimes, the men of God speak as a third person and use such terms as "He(God) will do so and so." The prophecies of woe are numerous throughout the prophetic books, especially, the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zechariah. For example: "Wherefore thus said the Lord, the God of hosts, because you speak this word, behold I will make my words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."² "Behold, the Lord will hurl you up and down with a man's throw; yea, He will wind you round and round; He will violently roll and toss you like a ball into a large country; there you shall die."³

There are many similarities between the prophecy of woe and the direct curse. Both contain an ill wish or statement of

1 Gen. 3:14.

2. Jer. 5:14.

3. Isa. 22:17-19.

an ill fate and concern two parties, namely, the speaker and the object. Both have definite objects rather than indefinite ones. Both are spoken against an object that has committed a sin or transgression. Therefore, both are to be regarded as declarations of punishment against transgressors, for example: "Then he said, "What have you done? Hark, your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Therefore, cursed be you from the ground which opened wide its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall become a restless wanderer on earth!"¹ "And the Lord said: Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not hearkened to my voice, neither walked therein, but have walked after the stubbornness of their own heart and after the Baalim which their fathers taught them: therefore thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. I will scatter them also among the nations whom they nor their fathers have known; And I will send the sword after them till I have consumed them."² The former is a direct curse, and the latter a prophecy of woe; the former has God as the speaker and Cain as the definite object, and the latter the prophet Jeremiah as the speaker for God and the children of Israel as the definite object. The former was invoked because Cain had killed Abel, and the latter because the

1. Gen. 4:10-12.

2. Jer. 9:12-15.

the children of Israel had forsaken the law of God and had walked after the Baalim.

The differences between the direct curse and the prophecy of woe, however, as may be observed are several. In the first place, the realization or fulfilment of the ill wish in the direct curse is mostly literal,¹ whereas the woe prophecy may be fulfilled in various ways. The prophecies of woe in general, are worded in such a way that some of them demand literal fulfilment, and some figurative.

Examples of the prophecies of woe that have been fulfilled in a literal way are: "Therefore thus said the Lord God: Behold I am against you, O Tyre, - - -And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers - - -"² This prophecy was fulfilled literally, when Tyre was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and her walls and towers broken down.³ The prophecy against the city of Sidon was also fulfilled in a literal way: "Behold, I am against you, O Sidon For I will send pestilence into her, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall fall in the midst of her, with the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am Jehovah."⁴ About 351 B.C.E., Sidon revolted against the Persians and was besieged by them. When all hope of saving their city was gone, the citizens chose to die. They shut themselves up and set fire to their dwellings and per-

1. Literal fulfilment or application of the direct curses is understood by such curses as to the woman, to Adam and to Cain (Gen. 3:16, 17-19; 4:10-12) and Joshua's curse against the Gibeonites (Jos. 9:22-23) etc.

2. Ezek. 26:3-4

3. G.B.T. Davis: "Fulfilled Prophecies that Prove the Bible", pp. 9-15.

4. Ezek. 28:22-23; cf also Micah 1:6; 3:12.

ished in flame. Thrice it fell into the hands of the crusaders and each time, was recaptured by the Moslems.¹ Thus the prophecy destruction and the sword upon her on every side - was fulfilled in a literal way.

Some examples of the prophecies of woe that indicate a figurative fulfilment are: "Wherefore thus said the Lord, the God of hosts: Because you speak this word, Behold I will make my words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them;"² "Therefore, thus said the Lord God: As I live, surely Mine oath that he has despised, and My covenant that he has broken, I will even bring it upon his own head. And I will spread My net upon him, and he shall be taken in My snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his treachery that he has committed against me."³ Figurative elements in the above prophecies are indicated by such words "God makes His words fire in the mouth of the prophet, and people wood;" "God spreads His net and he shall be taken in God's snare," etc.

Secondly, the difference between the direct curse and prophecy of woe may be understood by the fact that the realization of the ill wishes in the direct curse usually takes place during the lifetime of the object of the curse. For example, the curses of God against the serpent, the woman, Adam, and Cain are to be effected directly to the life of the objects through the realiza-

1. "Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible", p. 885; also G. T. B. Davis: op. cit., pp. 16-20; J. Urquhart: The Wonders of Prophecy, New York 1925, pp. 19-21.

2. Jer. 5:14; also, Jer. 21:5-6; 22:22; 44:11, etc.

3. Ezek. 17:19-21; also Ezek. 5:11-12; 25:7, 13, etc.

tion of the curses. However, the woe prophecy takes longer between the time of speaking and fulfilment. For example, the bondage of the Isralites in Egypt was foretold ^{to} Abraham¹ and it took place in the period between Jacob and Moses. The woe prophecies against Tyre,² Sidon,³ Samaria,⁴ and Zion,⁵ are also fulfilled at a much later time.

Thirdly, the object of the direct curse is usually a definite individual person or thing, while the woe prophecies are directed at a nation or people in general. In other words, the objects of the woe prophecies are less individualistic than those of the direct curse. For example, the serpent, the woman, Adam,⁶ Cain, King Ahab,⁷ and King Ahaziah⁸ are objects of the direct curses and they bear individual and personal characteristics.

Judah, Israel, and inhabitants of Jerusalem are common names when God directs the woe prophecies against His chosen people, the children of Israel.⁹ Such terms as Edom,¹⁰ Teman,¹¹ Damascus,¹² Tyre,¹³ Sidon,¹⁴ and Babylon¹⁵ are common in the Hebrew Bible, when God directs the woe prophecies against heathen nations.

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1. Gen. 15:13.
 2. Ezek. 26:3-14.
 3. Ezek. 28:22-23.
 4. Micah 1:6.
 5. Micah 3:12.
 6. Gen. 3:14-19; 4:10-11.
 7. I Kings 21:19-24.
 8. II Kings 1:3-4.
 9. Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 44:27; Ezek. 6:3-7, 11-14; 12:19-20; 33:27-28.
 10. Jer. 49:7-22; Ezek. 25:13-14; Lam. 4:22. / etc.
 11. Ezek. 25:13; Amos 1:12; Obad. 9-10.
 12. Jer. 49:23-27; Amos 1:3-5.
 13. Ezek. 26:7-14.
 14. Ezek. 28:20-24
 15. Isa. 47:1-3; Jer. 25:12-14; 50:8-46.

Therefore the objects of these prophecies bear a group rather than an individualistic character. The direct curse is also found in the related literatures. When Ereškigal, Queen of the Nether World,¹ curses her enuch, Ašûšunamir, she does this directly against the object of the curse without employing any third power: "alka Ašûšunamir lūzirka izra rabâ akali epiunî² āli lū akalka ḥabanāt³ āli lū maltīka^t šilli dūri lū manzāzūka askup-patu lū mūšabūka šakru u šamû limḥašū lētkā:⁴ come Ašûšunamir I will curse you with a mighty curse. The food of the city shall be your food. The (beer from) the containers of the city shall be your drink, the shade of the city wall shall be your resting place, the threshold shall be your dwelling place. The drunken and the thirsty shall strike your cheek."⁵ The content of the curse indicates that the speaker does not appeal to any third power but refers only to the object of the curse and directly to him. The precativ phrase, šakru u šamû limḥašū lētkā, seems to indicate that the curse is in a form of appeal. However, it stands to reason to assume that limḥašū is not here a mere wish or appeal, but a kind of command transmitted by others.⁶ The Akkadian precativ form, lū plus third person Preteritum, can be an actual wish or command transmitted by others according to the contexts.⁷

1. See J. Bottérs, "La Religion Babylonienne" (1952), p. 40.

2. See C A D, 4, p. 237, d.

3. See C A D, 6, p. 7.

4. For lēta maḥāšu and its parallels in other Sem. Languages cf. Held, J A O S, 79 (1959), p. 169.

5. C T, 15, 47, R. 23-28; cf. Jensen, K. B., 6/1, p. 88.

6. See the translation of this passage in JAOS, 79, p. 169, N. 10.

7. W. Soden: GAG, § 18, 4.

In the Baal Epic,¹ the virgin Anat curses El in the form of the direct curse: ²yilm b[/h a[1 tš/mh al tšmh b[/ al [t]hdm³ bqdl arkty [/ qdqdk ašhlk⁴šbt [kdmm] šbt d^qank mm'm: O El rejoice notexult not by the might of my long hand I will - - - -, I will make your gray hair flow with blood, the gray hair of your beard with gore.

Thus the direct curses in the related literatures are found primarily in myths and the speakers of the curses are deities rather than human beings, just as the majority of the direct curses in the Hebrew Bible are invoked by Jehovah God, or by men who invoke them as the speakers for God. In numerous curses in the related literatures, the various deities are appealed to for their fulfilment or application, but there is not a curse in the related literatures in which man or any third power is appealed to for fulfilment when the curse is spoken by a god. This phenomenon points to the idea that as the Bible regards Jehovah God as the Supreme Being who controls the blessings and cursing of the human being, so in the related literatures the various deities are regarded as the possessors of the power that can bring evil upon any object. There is no example of a direct curse that is spoken by a man in the related literatures.⁵

1. V AB, E:28-38; cf. III D, 1:7-12.

2. For the vocative "y" in Ugaritic, see A. D. Singer, JCS, 2 (1948), p. 4.

3. For $\pi\tau\eta/\pi\chi\omega$ in Hebrew and in Ugaritic see Held, Leshonenn, 18(1953), p. 149.

4. See Cassuto, The Goddess Anath (Jerusalem, 1953), p. 86.

5. Note that in the Tale of Aght Danil curses the earth because of his son's death (I D:38-46) but even Danil can hardly be considered a human being in our sense.

C. Indirect Curse.

A curse that is invoked in the form of a wish or appeal, employing the power of a third party for its fulfillment, may be regarded as an indirect curse. In this form, the speaker is usually a man who uses the name of God or of gods, asking God to bring evil upon the object. The indirect curse employs a form of wish by using such verbal forms as the Hebrew jussive of the Akkadian precative. Therefore, some regard this form of curse as a kind of prayer.¹

Many curses of this category are found in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Book of Psalms, for example: "Appoint a wicked man over him; And may Satan stand (שָׂטָן) at his right hand! When he is put on trial, let him come forth (יָצֵא) guilty; And may his prayer be turned into sin. May his days be few; Let another take (יִקַּח) his office. May his children become fatherless, and his wife a widow. May his children wander about (יִדְלוּ) and beg; And may they seek. . . May the creditor levy (יִשְׁבֹּץ) upon all that he has; And may strangers plunder (יִשְׁבֹּץ) his earnings. May there be none to show him kindness; Nor any to pity his fatherless children. May his posterity be cut off; In the generation following, may their name be blotted out (יִמָּחַ). May the guilt of his fathers be remembered (יִזָּכַר) by the Lord; And may the sin of his mother not be blotted out. May they be before the Lord continually, and may He (God) cut

1. E. Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, Vol. 1 pp. 25, 110, 479, 532; T. Cannan, "The Curse in Palestinian Folklore:", JPOS, XV, p. 238; James Strahan: *The Book of Job* (Edinburgh, 1914), p. 263.

2. See Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 187.

3. Zenzirli (Assyria): 22-23.

4. Kilamu of I'DU-Sagil: 12.

5. *Agitation of Ashura III*: 15-20.

off the memory of them from the earth."¹ The many jussive verb forms in the curse indicate that the curse is in the form of a wish. Also, it is clear from the curse that which is called for is to be fulfilled through the power of God through whom the wishes are invoked, and not through the power of the speaker himself. Therefore, an indirect relationship is understood between the speaker and the object of the curse as far as the supposed fulfillment of the curse is concerned.

Nearly all the curses in the Phoenician and Aramaic sepulchral inscriptions are in the form of a wish or appeal. In most cases, they are invoked through their various deities. Names of deities mentioned in the curses vary according to the people to whom the curses belong. For example: $\text{וּמַזְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל}$ (and whatever he shall ask let not Hadad give him; and let Hadad pour out wrath upon him);³ $\text{וְאֵי יִשְׁחַת הַסֶּפֶר זֶי יִשְׁחַת וְאֵשׁ בַּעַל צִמַּד אֵשׁ לַגִּבֹּר}$ (He who smashes this inscription may his head be smashed by Ba'l-Šamad who belongs to Gabbar);⁴ $\text{וְאֵחַ בַּעַל שָׁמֶם וְאֵל קַן אֶרֶץ וְסַעֲשׁ עָלָם וְכָל דְּרִי}$ $\text{בְּן אֵלִים אֵיךְ הַמְּעֻלֶּת הַאֵל וְאֵיךְ הַמְּבַלֵּךְ הַאֵל אֵדֵם אֵדֵם שֶׁם}$ (Let Baalshamem and El-the Creator-of-the-Earth and the Eternal-Sun and ~~all~~ the whole generation of gods wipe out that ruler and that king and that man who is just called a man).⁵

1. Ps. 109: 6-15: also curses of the similar form are found in the following passages: I Sam. 3:17; 14: 43-44; 25: 21-22; II Sam. 3:35; Ps. 31:18; 35: 4-8; 26: 37:15, 28: 40: 15-16; 55:16; 58: 8-9; 59: 13-14; 63: 10-11; 69: 23-29; 70: 3-4; 71: 13; 83: 14-18; 104: 36; 109: 28-29; 119: 78; 129: 5-6; 140: 10; 141: 10; etc.
2. See Cooke, North-Sem. Inscriptions, p. 169.
3. Zenjirli:Pnmw (Aramaic): 22-23.
4. Kilamuwa of Y'DY-Sam; al:15.
5. *Azitarwadda of Adama III*: 18-20.

Examples of the similar curses in Akk. Lit. are:

~~For example:~~ ^dEa ^dDamkina¹ [šurus-]su lissuhū zērašu lilqutū
^dUsmu² sukkal-mah ša ^dEa lū rabiš lemuttišu³ ša lā nakārim
 ana dariātīm "May Ea (and) Damkina tear out his root, may
 they pick up his seed, may Usmu, the sazier of Ea, be his
 evil demon (policeman) unchangingly forever;"⁴ ilū rabūtu
 ina napharšunu ezziš⁵ likkilmūšuma erreta marušta . . .
 līrurūšn" May the great gods in their totality look upon
 him furiously with an evil eye and curse him with a severe
 curse;"⁶ ilū rabūtum ša šamē u eršetim Anunnaki ina napharšunu
 šēd bītim libitti Ebabbar⁷ šuati zēršu māssu šābīšu nissīšu u
 ummānšu erretam maruštam līrurū" May the great gods of heaven
 and earth, the Anunnaki in their totality, the guardian spirit
 of the temple, the brick-god of Ebabbar, curse that (man, his
 descendants, his land, his warriors, his people, and his
 nation with a severe curse".⁸

1. For Ea(-Enki), a god of wisdom, and his consort Damkina see Bottéro, La Religion Babylonienne, pp. 36f.
2. Written Dingir ŠA = Usmu. See Labat, Manuel, p. 163, No. 353.
3. For other examples of rabiš lemuttim cf. CAD. 3, p. 111. For 𒂗𒌷 in Gen. 4:7 = AKK. rabišum) see Cassuto. The Book of Genesis, I (1944), pp. 118-120.
4. AFO. 12, p. 365: 31-37 (OB Malgium).
5. For ezēzu "to be furious" see CAD. 4, pp. 427 f.
6. LKA. p. 10: 30-34 (Adn.I).
7. For the difficult libitti Ebabbar see Driver - Miles. The Bab. Laws, II, p. 304.
8. CH, XXVIII: 70-83.

These examples of extra-Biblical curses indicate the religious background or superstitious practice of the people to whom the curses belong. The various deities mentioned in the curses are expressions of their polytheistic religious ideas that regarded these gods as sources of power. On the other hand, indirect curses spoken by men of God in the Bible never employ heathen deities to fulfill the curses. The Biblical indirect curses invoke Jehova God whom the Israelites worshipped as the only God, i.e., indirect curses in the Bible show the Hebrew idea of monotheistic religion in contrast to the extra-Biblical polytheistic ideas. "O Lord, let me not be put to shame for I have called upon you; let the *wicked* be put to shame. Let them . . .¹ for *sheol*." "O my God, make them like the whirling dust; like chaff before the wind, like a fire that burns up the forest, and like the flame that sets mountains afire; so do you pursue them with thy tempest, and affright them with thy hurricane. Fill their faces with shame that they may seek thy name, O Lord. Let them be disgraced and affrighted forever; Yea, may they be put to shame and perish."²

The people who are influenced by Mohammedanism express their religious ideas in their swearing, taking of oath or cursing. They swear by the Koran, by their holy month of Ramadan, of by the direction toward Mecca, etc.³ When they curse, especially

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1. Ps. 31:18.
 2. Ps. 83:14-18.
 3. E. Westermarck, The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas, Vol. II, 716; also Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. I, pp. 493-494.

in a form of indirect curse, they usually mention Allah¹ their god and rarely mention other deities as the supreme object of their appeal. Examples of indirect curses among the people of Islamic belief are: Allâh yidj'al maraḍ iṣībak mā ḥadâ ya-rafluh dawâ (May God make a disease whose cure nobody knows, befall you); Allâh yiḥri' laḥmak 'ân azmak (May God make your flesh wear away from your bones); Allâh yiḥirmak 'afîtak (May God deprive you of your good health); Allâh yiḥrig dammak (May God burn your blood).² "May God curse him who trusts neither enemy nor friend; "May God close the door for him who has only one."³ These curses indicate that the Moslems utter indirect curses which show the influence of Islamic monotheism.

Among those who believe in animis or the practice of magic, indirect curses correspond to these beliefs and practices. People of Somerset County in England used to curse their enemy through magical practices. For example, when they wished the death of their enemies, they stuck pins and thorns into the heart of a dead pig and threw it into the house of the enemy, while they recited the curse.⁴ Sometimes, they burned the heart of the animal which was stuck full of pins. The usual form of curse in such cases is: "It is not this heart I mean to burn, but the person's heart I wish to burn. Wishing them neither rest

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1. Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. I, 480; T. Canaan: "The Curses in Palestinian Folklore," JPOS, Vol. XV, p. 247.
 2. T. Cannan: op cit., p. 247.
 3. E. Westermarck: Wit and Wisdom in Morocco, p. 11; Numerous indirect curses of Moroccan Arabs are described by Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. I, 480-485.
 4. F. T. Elworthy: The Evil Eye, p. 53. Similar curses are found among the people of Southern Italy and other parts of European countries.

nor peace till they are dead and gone."¹ This kind of curse implies the belief that the spirit is situated in the middle of the heart, and that the magical power of the pinning or burning of the heart causes the heart of the enemy to perish. Thus, fulfillment of the above curses is dependent upon the magical power of the pinned or burned heart, just as fulfillment of the indirect curses in the Bible depends on the will and power of Jehovah God.

Trees, mountains, and other objects are mentioned in many indirect forms of curses among the people who worship the aforementioned objects.² For instance, when a man wishes the death of his enemy, he curses him through the medium of a tree. He writes down the name of the enemy on a sheet of paper and nails it to the trunk of a live tree very slowly, while he utters the curse: "May the spirit of this tree terminate the life of my enemy."³ Similar curses are invoked through mountains, stones, and other objects just as the indirect curses in the Bible and the related literatures are invoked through Jehovah God and various deities.

The term "indirect curse" may be justified by the fact that the speakers of the curses have no power to fulfill

found in the Bible and the related literatures. Also, people

1. F. T. Elworthy, The Evil Eye, p. 51.
2. Tree worship was common in Egypt and in Ancient Greece and Rome, The Evil Eye, pp. 97-99. Semites worship holy trees: R. Smith, The Religion of the Semites, pp. 191 ff; also M. C. Garlick: "Note on The Sacred Tree in Mesopotamia", PSBA, XL, pp. 111-112. Japanese worship Mt. Fuji; Koreans worship Chun San (Mt. Heaven) where Dan Gun, the founder of the nation, was supposed to have descended from heaven about 4300 years ago.
3. This form of a curse is widely known among the South Koreans.

or apply the curses. The curses are to be fulfilled by the power of the deities mentioned in the curses. The speakers of the curse can do no more than merely wish for the fulfillment of their curses through the power of God or the gods mentioned in the curses. The sense of the term "indirect curse" is also to be understood in the light of the nature of direct curses. The direct curse which is dealt with under a separate chapter of this dissertation is not only invoked by the speaker but also it is fulfilled through the power of the speaker. No indirect power or assistance is necessary in the fulfillment of a direct curse. For example, the curse of God directed against the serpent¹ is not a wish expressed by God to someone to bring the curse upon the serpent, but rather a direct statement of a cursed condition which was spoken and fulfilled by God: "And the Lord said to the serpent: "Because you did this, cursed be you more than all the cattle and all wild beasts; on your belly shalt you crawl and dust shalt you eat all the days of your life."

Another form of curse that may be regarded as an indirect curse is that which is in the form of a wish without mentioning deities or any object of power. This kind of curse is found in the Bible and the related literatures. Also, people in many parts of the world curse in a similar form. Examples of curses of this category are: "Cursed be the day on which I

1. Gen. 3: 14.

2. Talmud of Sidon: 5-8.

3. Talmud of Sidon: 5-9.

was born. The day on which my mother bore me let it not be
 (אֲלֵהֶם) blessed!"¹ "May they be put to shame and destroyed
 (יְבוֹשׁוּ יְכַסּוּ) who are hostile to me; May they be covered
 (יְבוֹשׁוּ) with abuse and shame who seek to injure me".²

These are examples of some of the curses in the Bible that
 are in the form of a wish and are to be fulfilled through a
 third power rather than the power of the speaker himself.

The third power is to be understood, although it is not
 mentioned in the curses. ואם פתח תפתח עלבתי ורגז

תרגזן אל יכן כד זרע בחים תחת שמש ואסכב את רפאם
 (But if you do open it, and if you do disquiet me, may you not
 have any seed among the living under the sun or resting place
 together with the shades).³ כֹּחַ עֲמַלְכֶת וְכֹחַ אָדָם אֵשׁ יִפְתָּח

עַל־תִּפְתָּח זֶה אֵשׁ יִשָּׂא אֵת חֹלֶת עֲסֻכְבִּי אֵשׁ
 יַעֲמִסֵּן בְּעֲסֻכְבִּי זֶה אֵל יִכֵּן כֹּס עֲסֻכְבִּי אֵת רַפְאִי אֵל
 יִקְבֵּר בְּקִבְרִי וְאֵל יִכֵּן כֹּס בֶּן וְזֶרַע תַּחְתָּנִי

(Any ruler and any man who shall open this resting place or
 who shall take up the coffin in which I am resting or who
 shall carry me away from this resting place, may they have no
 resting place with the shades, may they not be buried in a
 grave, and may their son and seed not to take their place!)⁴

The above curses of Phoenician sepulchral inscriptions
 are written in the form of a wish but they are not directed
 to any specific deities. However, it is understood that the

1. Jer. 20: 14.

2. Ps. 71: 13.

3. Tabnit of Sidon : 6-8.

4. Eshmun'azar of Sidon: 6-9.

curses are to be fulfilled through an unmentioned third power rather than the power of the speakers who are buried in the graves. Curses of the above kind are rarely found in Akkadian inscriptions.)¹ In nearly all the curses in Akkadian inscriptions invoked by men in the form of a wish, particular gods are appealed to for the fulfillment of application of the curses.

The curse in the form of wish without mentioning any third power is found among people in various parts of the world: Moroccan Arabs say: "May he not grow old. May he pass away young."² Among some tribes of Assam in Asia, similar curses are often uttered after a peace treaty between tribes: "May the man who breaks this peace be killed like this dog."³ Inhabitants on the borders of Assam and Burma make similar curses when two tribes take an oath of friendship: "May the party who breaks his agreement die even as this animal has died, and may he be buried outside the village and his spirit never rest; may his family also die and may every bad fortune attend his village."⁴ "May fire blast the eyes of the person who has stolen my bananas."⁵ "May your tongue be pulled out: May your eyes be dimmed."⁶ In these curses there are no appeals to definite third powers. It is clear, however,

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1. Akkadian Myths, Royal inscriptions, Kudurru, Cylinder and building inscription, memorial-stones, Epilogue of the Code of Hamm., etc.
 2. Westermarck: Wit and Wisdom in Morocco, pp. 11, 393.
 3. J. G. Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament, p. 158.
 4. J. G. Frazer: op. cit., p. 159.
 5. G. Turner: Samoa (London, 1884), p. 184.
 6. Common curses among the Koreans.

that they are not to be fulfilled by the power of the speakers, but through an unnamed third power if they are to be fulfilled at all.

Therefore these differences between the direct curse and the indirect curse may be noted.

(1) The indirect curse is always invoked by men through the medium of God or of gods, while the direct curse is usually invoked by God or gods or by a man of God without appealing to a third power.

(2) The indirect curse is always in a form of a mere wish or appeal to a third power, while the direct curse is not a mere wish or appeal but a sentence or declaration of a cursed state. For example, the direct curses such as the curses of God against the serpent, the woman, Adam, and Cain¹ are not mere wishes in which God appeals to someone to carry out their provisions but they are direct declarations of a cursed state.

Hebrew Bible and in the related literatures are classified by the nature of their conditional clauses, they may be placed in three main groups.

1. There are those curses that are to be brought against an object if the object should violate the laws of God, for

example, the curses in the Book of Deuteronomy.

2. Most curses in the Phoenician and Aramaic Sepulchral and Building Inscriptions are conditional and headed by QX. The curses in the Epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi are also headed by QX. (QX, XXVI: 18 ff. cf. also Job 31: 7-8, 9-11, 21-22, 38-40.

3. Deut. 28: 15-68, Num. 5: 19; Deut. 11: 28; 30: 17-18; Mal. 2: 2, and others.

1. Gen. 3: 14-15, 16, 17-18; 4: 11-12.

D. Conditional Curse.

A curse whose fulfillment depends on the actions of those against whom it is directed may be termed a conditional curse. This form usually has a conditional clause at the beginning of which is followed by a description of the ill wishes of the curse. In most cases, the conditional clauses are headed by the conditional particles *DX* (Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic) or *summa*. (Akkadian).¹ However, when conditional clauses are stated in a positive sense, *DX* is followed by the negative particle. *XŠ/lā*.)² In other words, if the conditional clause deals with acts which if committed, would cause the terms of the curse to be fulfilled, then the conditional clause is usually headed by *DX* alone. *which if not done would cause the curse* If the clause deals with things to be fulfilled, then the clause usually contains *XŠ DX*.

The nature of the conditional clauses in the curses differs according to the motives of the curses. If the conditional curses in the Hebrew Bible and in the related literatures are classified by the nature of their conditional clauses, they may be placed in three main groups.

1. There are those curses that are to be brought against an object if the object should violate the laws of God, for

1. Most curses in the Phoenician and Aramaic Sepulchral and Building Inscriptions are conditional and headed by *DX*. The curses in the Epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi are also headed by *summa*. (CH, XXVI: 18 ff. cf. also Job 31: 7-8, 9-12, 21-22, 38-40.

2. Deut. 28: 15-68, Num. 5: 19; Deut. 11:28; 30: 17-18; Mal. 2:2, and others.

1. Lev. 26: 14-17; cf. also, Lev. 26: 18-30; 23-25; 27-39.

example,

"But if you will not listen (לֹא תִשְׁמָע) to me, nor observe all these commandments; if you reject (וְרָסַת) my statutes, and treat my ordinances as abhorrent, so that you do not observe all my commandments by breaking my covenant, I will do this to you: I will inflict terror over you, even consumption and fever, exhausting your eyes, and depressing your spirits; you shall sow your seed in vain, since your enemies shall consume it. I will set my face against you, so that you shall be laid low before your enemies, and your foes shall rule over you, and you shall flee when no one is pursuing."¹

"If you are not careful to observe (לֹא תִשְׁמָר) all the portions of this code, written in this book, by standing in awe of this glorious and awful name, the Lord your God, then the Lord shall bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, severe and prolonged, and severe and prolonged diseases; He shall bring back upon you all the diseases of Egypt which you stood in dread of, and they will fasten themselves on you; indeed every kind of sickness and plague that is not recorded in this book of law the Lord shall inflict on you, until you are destroyed. You shall be left a paltary few, instead of being like the stars of heaven for number, because you would not heed the injunctions of the Lord your God. As the Lord took delight in making you prosperous and numerous, so the Lord shall take delight in exterminating and destroying

1. Lev. 26: 14-17; cf. also, Lev. 26: 18-20; 23-26; 27-39.

you, and you shall be torn from the land which you are invading for conquest; The Lord shall scatter you among all people, from the end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve alien gods of wood and stone, of whom you have had no experience, nor had your fathers. Among these nations you shall have no ease, nor shall there be a resting place for the sole of your foot, but the Lord shall give you there an anxious mind, spent eyes and a despondent spirit."¹

The nature of this type of conditional curse may be defined as a threat² to promote the keeping of the laws and statutes of God. Therefore, the aim of these curses is not to bring harm to their objects, but make the objects observe God's laws and avoid all the calamities mentioned in the curses.

The relationship between conditional curses of this category, and the laws in the Hebrew Bible and related literatures deserves some explanation. The conditional curses and the laws are closely related in their form and in their function.³ Those Hebrew laws especially that contain punitive conclusions are very similar to conditional curses.

Examples of the Hebrew laws that contain punitive conclusions

clearly. The main difference between the laws of Deuteronomy

1. Deut. 28: 58-65; cf. also Deut. 28: 16-57; 30: 17-18 11:28; Mal. 2:2; etc.
2. C. Levis also emphasizes threat as a function of the curses in the Hebrew Bible, J. E., Vol. IV, p. 389.
3. C. C. Torrey and recently Stanley Gevertz note the similarities between West-Semitic conditional curses and Hebrew law in their form as well as in their function. West-Semitic Curses and Hebrew Law, a paper presented at the 95th meeting of SBLE, New York, 1960.

are:

"Ye shall not eat the blood of any creature for the life of every creature is ~~its~~ blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off."¹

"Any man who lies with his father's wife he has uncovered his father's nakedness - both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be on their heads."²

"Any man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to death; since they have committed a bestial act, their blood shall be on their heads."³

"If any man lies with a male, as with a woman, since they have committed an abominable act; they shall be put to death; their blood shall be on their heads."⁴

These examples of Biblical laws resemble conditional curses since the laws start with a hypothetical description of a violation of the law and end up with a punitive conclusion, just as a conditional curse starts with a hypothetical antecedent and ends with an imprecatory conclusion.

While the Biblical laws show little difference from the conditional curses, the laws in the related literatures, in particular the Code of Hammurabi, show the difference more clearly. The main difference between the laws of Hammurabi and the conditional curses in the Epilogue of the Code lies in the verb forms used to describe the execution of the laws,

1. Lev. 17:14.

2. Ibid., 20:11.

3. Lev. 20:12.

4. Ibid., 20:13.

and those used to describe the fulfillment of the curses. All the punitive conclusions in the laws are in the nature of orders directed to men to punish the violators, and use the present form of the verb in most cases. On the other hand, all the imprecatory conclusions in the conditional curses are in the precative form which is the form of appeal. They mention the names of gods and use the "Preterit form of the verb with the precative particle "lu". Some examples are:

"šumma aššat awīlim itti zikarim šanīm ina itūlim¹ ittašbat ikassūšunūtīma ana mē inaddūšunūti . . ." If a married woman has been caught while lying with another man, they shall bind them and throw them into the water.²

"šumma awīlum ana mārīšu kallatam ihīrma³ māršu ilmassi šū warkānumma ina sūniša ittatiīlma iššabtūšu awīlam šuāti ikassūšuma ana mē inaddūšu."⁴ (If a man picked a bride for his son and his son had intercourse with her, but later he himself has lain in her bosom and they have caught him. they shall bind that man and throw him into the water.)⁵

"šumma ina bīt awīlim išātum innapih̄ma awīlum ša ana bullim⁶ illiku ana numāt⁷ bēl bītim īnšu iššīma⁸ numāt bēl

1. utūlu-(m). See Von Soden, GAK § 107 i-m.
2. CH, § 129.
3. See CAD, 6. pp 119f.
4. The text has inaddūši, but this is obviously a scribal error, see Driver-Miles. The Bab. Laws, II, p. 61
5. CH, § 155.
6. For bullum "to extinguish (a fire)" see Von Soden, AHW, p. 121.
7. For numātum "goods (of a household)" See Driver-Miles. The Bab. Laws, II, p. 161. Note that Akk. numātum has nothing to do with Ugaritic n'm (contrast Gordon, UM, p. 297 No. 1256).
8. cf. perhaps Gen. 39:7.

bītim ~~inšu iššīma~~¹ numāt bēl bītim ilteqi² awīlum šu ana išātīm šuāti innaddi." If a fire broke out in a man's house and a man who went to extinguish it coveted the goods of the owner of the house and has taken the goods of the owner of the house, that man shall be thrown into that fire."³

As these examples show, punishments in the laws of Hammurabi are to be executed by men. They are never appealed to gods for execution. However, the imprecatory conclusions of the conditional curses in the Epilogue are never directed to men to be fulfilled. They are in the form of an appeal to gods or in the form of a wish that the ills specified may be fulfilled through some mysterious and greater power than that of men, for example "anum⁴ rabūm abu ilī nabū palēja melam šarrūtīm lītersū⁵ haṭṭašū⁶ lišbir šīmātišū līrur." (May the great Anum, the father of the gods, who proclaimed my reign, take away from him the awe-inspiring radiance, may he break scepter and curse his destiny!)"⁷

"šamaš dajānum rabium ša šamē u eršetim⁸ muštešer⁹ šaknat napištīm bēlum tukulti šarrūssu liskip: (May Shamash the

1. Cf. perhaps Gen. 39: 7.

2. The text of the Code has il-te-di, but this is no doubt a scribal error for il-te-qi: cf. Driver-Miles, op. cit., p. 21.

3. CH, 8 25.

4. On Anum "the father of the gods" see Bottero, La Religion Bab., p. 35.

5. For eṭērum "to take something away" see CAD. 4, pp. 401 f.

6. See Held, JAOS, 79, p. 169, n. 7.

7. CH, XXVI: 45-52.

8. On šamaš "god of justice" see Bottero op. cit., p. 384.

9. For šutēšurum "to provide justice: see CAD, 4, pp. 361 f.

great judge of heaven and earth, who provides justice for (all) living beings, the lord, (in whom) is my trust, overturn his kingdom).¹

"Enlil errētim² dannīātīm ina pîšū ša lā uttakkaru līruršūma arhiš likšudāšū" (May Enlil by his command which cannot be altered, curse him with severe curses, and may they come upon him quickly!)³

The imprecatory conclusions of the conditional curses in the Phoenician and Aramaic Inscriptions also follow the pattern of the above examples. They appeal to the gods for fulfillment or they are in a form of a wish without mentioning the names of any gods. But they are never uttered in the form of command that men should bring evil upon the violators, as the laws of Hammurabi are. Some examples of imprecatory conclusions in the conditional curses of Phoenician and Aramaic Inscriptions are:

אֲלֵיכֶן זֶרַע בְּחַיִּים (May you not have any seed among the living under the sun, or resting place together with the shades);⁴

אִי יִשְׁחַת הַסֵּפֶר זֶ יִשְׁחַת רֹאשׁוֹ בְּעַל צֶמֶד אֲשֶׁר לַגִּבֹּר (He who smashes this inscription may his head be smashed by Ba'l-Samad who belongs to Gabbar);⁵

וְכֵן דָּר בֶּן אֱלֹהִים אֵיךְ הַמֵּאֲלֵכֶת הָאֵל (אֵיךְ הַמֵּאֲלֵכֶת הָאֵל וְאֵיךְ הַמֵּאֲלֵכֶת הָאֵל וְאֵיךְ הַמֵּאֲלֵכֶת הָאֵל) (Let Baalshamem and El-the-Creator-of-the Earth and the Eternal-

not obey his father or mother, nor heed them, even when they

1. CH, XXVII: 14-20.
2. See Von Soden, AHW, p. 244
3. CH, XXVIII: 84-90.
4. Tabnit of Sidon: 7-8.
5. Kilamuwa of Y'DY-Sam'al: 15.

1. Ariswadda of Amur, III: 13 ff.
2. Zinjirli: Haddad: 23-24.

Sun and all the generation of gods wipe out that ruler and that king and that man who is called a man. . . .);¹ אהדד

חורא ליתבה, --- אל יתן לה לאכל ברגז ושנה למנה מנה בלילא
(And let Hadad pour out wrath upon him . . . eat in terror, withhold sleep from him by night, and inflict confusion upon him).²

From the above examples, the distinction between laws and conditional curses in the related literatures is clear. Laws are given to men by men, and are to be executed by men, whereas the conditional curses are invoked by men but they are to be fulfilled by gods or through a mysterious power other than that of men.

However, this point cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish in the Bible between the laws and the conditional curses that are related to laws. In the Bible both of them are given by God with some exceptions. Execution of punishments in the laws of the Hebrew Bible is not entirely given to men as in the Code of Hammurabi. Some of the Biblical laws indicate men as those who punish and some say God himself will intervene in the punishment of the law breaker.

Examples of the laws that require punishment by men are:

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey his father or mother, nor heed them, even when they chastise him, his father and his mother must take hold of him and bring him out before the elders of his city; . . .

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1. Azitawadda of Adana, III:18 ff. p. 442, *Vierteljahrsschrift für bibl. Archäol.* p. 426.
 2. Zenjirli: Hadad: 23-24. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 74-75, 97-100, 133-137.

then all his fellow-citizens shall stone him with stones. . . ."1

"And if any man has committed a crime punishable by death, and has been put to death, and you have impaled him on a stake, his corpse must not remain all night on the stake."2

Some examples of the laws that indicate God's intervention in the punishment of violators:

"On the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement: You must do no work at all on that same day: And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from the midst of his people."3

"Anyone at all of the Israelites or the proselytes who sojourn in Israel, who dedicates any of his children to Molech: must be put to death; the people of the land must stone him with stones. I, too, will set my face against that man and cut him off from his people, because he has dedicated some of his children to Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning my holy name."4

Both examples are regarded as laws, and are found in passages where series of laws are recorded.⁵ Both man's execution and God's intervention are seen in the punishment of law breakers. What, then, is the difference between Hebrew laws that contain punitive conclusions and conditional

1. Deut. 21: 18-21.

2. Deut. 21: 23-23.

3. Lev. 23:27-30.

4. Ibid., 20: 2-3.

5. Delitzsch, Pentateuch, Vol. II, p. 442, Ibid., p. 426.
David Daube, Studies in Biblical Law, pp. 78-85,
97-100, 135-137.

6. Ibid., 38-39.

curses that are related to the law. The distinction is not so clear as it is in the related literatures. There is some evidence, however, that may lead to an understanding of the difference between the laws and the conditional curses that are related to the law. The law always contains a full description of the hypothetical antecedent which describes the nature of the law and is followed by the punitive conclusion. But the conditional curses that are related to the law do not contain a detailed description of the law in the conditional clause. Some examples of the both groups are:

a. Conditional curses that are related to the law:

"If you will not heed the injunctions of the Lord your God by being careful to observe all his commandments and statutes which I am commanding you today, then all the following curses shall come upon you and overtake you; . . . The Lord shall send curses on you, trouble and distress. . ."¹

"If you are not careful to observe the provisions of this code written in this book. . . then the Lord shall bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendents, severe and prolonged plagues. . ."²

"But if you will not listen to me, nor observe all these commandments; and if you reject my statutes, and treat my ordinances as abhorrent by not observing all my commandments by breaking my covenant; I also will do this to you: I will inflict consumption and fever upon you as terrors, exhausting your eyes and depressing your spirits; and you

1. Deut. 28: 15-20.

2. Ibid., 58-59.

shall sow your seed in vain, since your enemies shall consume it."¹

"If you will not listen to me even for these things, I will punish you seven times more for your sins, I will batter your vaunted power. . . ."²

"If you live at enmity with me, and will not listen to me, I will bring seven more afflictions upon you as your sins deserve."³

"And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but live at enmity with me then I in turn will live at enmity with you, and I will afflict you seven times for your sins."⁴

b. Examples of laws that are similar to the conditional curse:

"If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death; since they have committed a bestial act, their blood shall be on their heads."⁵

"Any man that has sexual intercourse with an animal must be put to death; and the animal must be slain"⁶

"If a person turns to ghosts and the familiar spirits, by going astray after them, I will set my face against that person, and will cut him off from among his people."⁷

1. Lev. 26: 14-16.

2. Ibid., 18-19.

3. Ibid., 21.

4. Ibid., 23-25

5. Lev. 20: 12.

6. Lev. 20: 15.

7. Ibid., 6.

1. Lev. 17:10.

2. Deut. 28: 15, 28.

"If any man belonging to the house of Israel, or the proselytes who sojourn among them, eats any blood at all, I will set my face against the person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people."¹

The difference between the laws and the conditional curses that are related to the laws may be observed in the above examples. As these examples show, each law contains a detailed explanation of the nature of the law, which is followed by a punitive conclusion. The conditional curses related to the law, however, do not contain a full description of the nature of the individual law. Since the conditional curses are invoked as threats to promote the keeping of the law and not to describe the law itself, they treat the law in general terms:

"If you will not heed the injunctions of the Lord your God by being careful to observe all his commandments and his statutes; if you are not careful to observe all the provisions of his code, written in this book. . . ."²

Another aspect of the relation between the two groups is the fact that the conditional curse appears after the description of the law as a conclusion which is in the form of a warning in order to promote obedience to the law. The great curses in Deut. 28 and Lev. 26 are, in a sense, conclusions to the long descriptions of the laws, regulations, and instructions concerning the ceremonial and civil life of the

1. Lev. 17:10.
2. Deut. 28: 15, 28.

3. Exodus 23: 21-23.

4. J.M.P. Smith, *The Moral Life of the Hebrews*, p. 9.

Israelites in the chapters that preceded them.¹

A similar relationship between the law and the threatening imprecation is found in the related literatures. The curses in the Epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi stand as a warning to protect the preceding long series of laws. The location of many curses in the concluding parts of the Aramaic and Phoenician Inscriptions is also worthy of notice.

Usually, the threatening imprecations appear after a long series of laws. But sometimes, the same type of imprecation follows after a single law. For example:

"You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If you ever wrong them and they cry aloud to me, I will be sure to hear their cry and my wrath will blaze, and I will slay you with the sword; thus shall your wives become widows and your children orphans."²

The above example contains two different parts. The first part is a law, and the second may be regarded as a threatening conditional curse rather than a punitive conclusion as part of the law.

2. Some conditional curses are uttered in order to strengthen oaths, vows or covenants of various kinds. Strengthening the oath or vow means that the curse serves as a warning and threat to the speaker that he say nothing but the truth.³ Or if the curse is uttered between two parties when they make a covenant of peace, then it serves as a threat against any violation of

1. M. Joseph UJE, Vol. III, p. 434; Stanley A. Cook "The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi", p. 15.

2. Exodus 22: 21-23.

3. J.M.P. Smith, The Moral Life of the Hebrews, p. 9.

the covenant.¹ Sometimes, curses of this kind are uttered to prove one's innocence, as when Job speaks a series of ill wishes to prove his purity.² Some examples of Biblical curses in this category are

"And the priest shall have her take an oath saying to the woman:

'If no man has lain with you and if you have not turned aside to indecent acts while married to your husband, you be immune to this water that produces pain, that brings a curse; but if you have gone wrong while married to your husband, and if you have defiled yourself and some man besides your husband has lain with you - then the priest shall have the woman take the oath of execration and the priest shall say to the woman - "May the Lord make you an execration and an oath among your people, by making your thigh to fall away, and your belly to swell; may this water that brings a curse enter your bowels, causing your belly to swell and your thigh to fall away' and the woman shall say: Amen, Amen."³

"If I have walked with falsehood and my foot has hastened forwards deceit, let him weigh me in just scales so that God may know my integrity! . . ."⁴

"If my step has turned from the way, and my heart walked after my eyes, and if a spot has cleaved to my hands; then may

1. James G. Frazer: Folk Lore in the Old Testament, pp. 155-162.

2. The curses in the Book of Job, Chapter 31, are of this category. cf. Also Edward Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco (London, 1926), p. 492. It is worth noting that similar curses are found among the Arabs in Morocco.

3. Num. 5:19-22, cf. J.M.P. Smith, The Moral Life of the Hebrews. pp. 9f.

4. Job 31: 5-6.

I sow, but another eat; and may the produce of my field be uprooted!"¹

"If my heart have been enticed after a woman, and I have lain in wait at my friend's door; Then let my wife grind for another man, And let others bend over her."²

"If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan because I saw my help in the gate; Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder-blade and my arm be broken from the socket."³

"If my land cry out against me, and its furrows also weep together; If I have eaten its product without paying, or have caused the tillers thereof to be disappointed - instead of wheat let thorns grow up and weeds instead of barley... ."⁴

The conditional clauses in these curses are purely hypothetical antecedents of the imprecative conclusion. Thus, the imprecatory ill wishes that follow the conditional clauses are not expressions of the real desire of the speaker of the curses, but the means of strengthening the oath. Job's curse makes this idea clear:

"If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan because I saw my help in the gate; Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder-blade, and my arm be broken from the socket."⁵

This curse of Job does not mean that he really wishes his arms be broken off from his body. The motive of the curse

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1. Job 31: 7-8.
 2. Ibid., 9-10.
 3. Ibid., 21-22.
 4. Ibid., 38-40.
 5. Ibid., 21-22.

is quite different from the ill wishes contained in the curse. The curse means that Job did not lift his hand against the orphan. Therefore, the purpose of the curse is not Job's wish to invite such calamity to himself.¹ The aim of the curse is to prove his innocence or to strengthen the oath stating that he never did such violence. Some call this "the oath of clearance."² and others "the oath of purgation."³ The conditional curse, for strengthening an oath, is not found in the related literatures. However, such curses are commonly found among people in different parts of the world.⁴

3. Some conditional curses are employed to protect property of various kinds. Most of the curses in the related literatures are in this category. Nearly all the curses in the Phoenician and Aramaic sepulchral and building inscriptions are conditional and for the protection of property. Most of the curses in Alskadian Royal inscriptions. Kudurru - and various memorial stones, are invoked in order to protect property. The great curses in the Epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi were also invoked by Hammurabi, to protect the ownership of the law and to keep the written law unaltered.⁵ Examples of conditional antecedents in the curses that are related to protection of property are: אס פתח תפתח עלתי
ורגז תרגזן אל יכין בך זרע בחים תחת שמש

1. Cf. the expositions on Chapter 31 of the Book of Job by F. Delitzsch in his commentary, cf. S. R. Driver, G.B. Gray in their commentary on the Book of Job (ICC)
2. J. Strahan, The Book of Job, (Edinburgh 1914), pp. 254-265; J. Rappaport, "Oath" J. E. Vol. IX, p. 365.
3. S. A. Cook, The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi, pp. 63 ff.
4. Cf. The chapter of this study entitled "The Reason or Motive of the Curses."
5. See G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles, The Bab. Laws, I, pp. 36 ff.

(But if you do open it and if you do disturb me, may you not have any seed among the living under the sun.¹

כל אדם אשר יפתח את הקבר אשר אני בו וכל אדם אשר יעלה את הקבר אשר אני בו
 כל אדם אשר יעלה את הקבר אשר אני בו (Any ruler and any man who shall open this

resting-place, or who shall take up the casket in which I am resting or who shall carry me away from this resting-place -- may they not have a resting-place with the shades).² šumma

awīlum šū <ana³>awātija ša ina marīja ašturu lā iqūlma errētija imēšma errēt ilī lā idurma dīn adīnu uptassis⁴ awātija uštepe⁵l ušurātija uttakkir šumī šaṭram ipšitma šumsu ištatar⁶ (If that man did not heed my words which I inscribed on my stela, and disregarded my curses, and did not hear the curses of the gods, if he efaced the legal decisions which I decided changed my words (and) altered my figures (reliefs) erased my inscribed name (thereon) and has written his (own) name); ša šumī šaṭram ipaššitūma šumsu išaṭṭarn . . .^dEa dDamkina [iśis-]su⁷ liššū zērašu lilqutu⁸ (He who erases my name and inscribes his name (instead) . . . May Ea and Damkina uproot him and gather up his seed).⁹

1. Tabnit of Sidon : 6-8.

2. Eshmuncazar of Sicon: 6-8.

3. See Driver, The Bab. Laws, II, p. 100.

4. See CAD, 3, p. 103.

5. For this quadriliteral verb see A. Heidel, AS, No. 13, pp. 40-45.

6. CH, XXVI: 18-35.

7. See CAD, 7, p. 240.

8. AfO, 12, p. 365: 22-23 (Takil-ilisu).

9. For Similar examples cf. RA, 31, p. 144: 22; BB st., No. 8, III: 27, and many others.

Nearly all the curses found in Phoenician and Aramaic sepulchral and building inscriptions, in Akkadian Royal inscriptions, in Kudruru inscriptions and in various memorial stones are conditional curses to protect the related property.

The conditional curse that is uttered in order to protect a definite property is rare in the Bible. There is actually one conditional curse in the Bible that is invoked to protect a definite property. That is the curse of Darius,¹ the king of Persia, to protect his decree and the temple in Jerusalem.

Since the curse was spoken neither by God nor by a man of God and follows the form of the majority of curses in the related literatures, it can hardly be regarded as a typical curse of the Bible.

There are various kinds of ill wishes called for in the curses both in the Bible and in the related literatures - shortening of life, childlessness, scarcity, disease, famine, drought and various mental and physical afflictions. The particular ill is often determined by the object of the curse or the reason why the curse is spoken. For example, the curses of God, directed against the serpent and the woman,¹ are spoken because both participated in the same incident, i.e. the eating of the forbidden fruit. But the ill wishes in both cases are sharply differentiated because one is an animal and the other a human being. A serious basis for the curse would bring a grievous ill wish and a less grave basis a mild ill wish. For example, to curse God or dishonor parents are considered to be serious matters, and bring the ill wish of death.² Canaan was cursed by Noah to be the lowest of slaves because his father Ham did not cover Noah's nakedness.³

1. Ezra 6: 11-12.

2. Gen. 3: 14-15; Lev. 24: 15-16; Deut. 27: 16; Ex. 21: 17.

CHAPTER III

THE DEGREES OF ILL WISH IN THE CURSES

In the previous chapter, the various degrees of harm to be brought about by the working ^{of the} Biblical curses have been noted in connection with the words $\gamma\gamma\chi$, שִׁפּ and in connection with the fulfillment or application of the curses. The aim of this chapter is to deal with the various degrees of ill wished for in the curses regardless of application or fulfillment.

There are various kinds of ill^s called for in the curses ^{both} in the Bible and in the related literatures - shortening of life, childlessness, scarcity, disease, famine, drought and various mental and physical afflictions. The particular ^{variety of} ill is often determined by the object of the curse or the reason why the curse is spoken. For example, the curses of God, directed against the serpent and the woman,¹ are spoken because both participated in the same incident, i.e. the eating of the forbidden fruit. But the ill wishes in both cases are sharply differentiated because one is an animal and the other a human being. A serious basis for the curse would bring a grievous ill wish and a less grave basis a mild ill wish. For example, to curse God or dishonor parents are considered to be serious matters, and bring the ill wish of death.² Canaan was cursed by Noah to be the lowest of slaves because his father Ham did not cover Noah's nakedness.³

1. Gen. 3: 14-16, ~~Ibid.~~ 17.

2. Ex. 22: 27; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 27:16; Ex. 21:17.

3. Gen. 9: 25.

G. Oehler says that the effects of blessing and cursing in the Bible are confined to earthly life.¹ There are, however, curses in the Bible that mention the term *šixq* as a place where the cursed one would go.² Although the etymology of *šixq* has not been clearly determined the generally accepted view among the students of the Hebrew Bible, is that *šixq* is not a place on the surface of the earth, i.e., part of the realm of the earthly life. Some understand *šixq* as the hell or underworld where the wicked go after death.³ Qorah and his associates go down alive as a result of God's judgment.⁴ From the Canaanite mythology we know today that Hebrew *šixq* is same as the realm of the god Môt. The latter is the ruler of the netherworld in Ugaritic⁵ and is primarily god of death and pestilence to be equated with Ereškigal, goddess of the netherworld, in sumero-Akkadian mythology.⁶ Note the parallelism of *šixq* in the Hebrew Bible, e. g. Hab. 2:5.⁷ and *šixq* as a personification of the Canaanite god Môt.⁸

1. G. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 195.

2. Ps. 31: 18; 55: 16.

3. B D B, p. 982.

4. Num. 16: 30, 33.

5. See Cassuto, The Goddess Anath, pp. 47-49.

6. cf. Bottéro, La Religion Babylonienne, p. 40; Cassuto, op. cit., p. 49.

7. cf. I*AB, 1: 14-22.

8. cf. Is. 5: 13; Prov. 1: 12; 27:20; 30: 15-16, and others.

The Akkadian expressions *šapliš ina eršetim*¹ (below in the netherworld) and *eršet lā târi* (land of no return): Sumerian KUR.NU. GI4.² are to be regarded as synonyms to Hebrew *שִׁחַן*.³ Therefore, the references in Biblical curses cannot be confined to the life on this earth.

Biblical and extra-Biblical curses may be placed in three categories as far as the degrees of the ill wished for in the curses are concerned. The first is the ill wish that brings various physical and mental sufferings upon life in general; secondly, curses that contain ill wishes to terminate the life of the cursed or with various afflictions and miseries; and thirdly, curses that deal with the dead body or *שִׁחַן* that is a condition after death. These categories of course, refer to the curses that have human beings or other living creatures like animals as their objects. Those which are directed against other than human beings or animals may not be classified according to the above categories. In the Bible, curses are directed against the earth,⁴ and the prophet Jeremiah, curses the day of his birth.⁵ Upon such inanimate objects, it is impossible to bring sufferings or death.

A. Afflictions Upon the Living.

The ill wishes in many of the curses of both groups are

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1. CAD. 4, pp. 310 f.
 2. CT, 15, 46: 1 ff; *ibid.*, n. 5-6.
 3. A. Jeremias, The Babylonian Conception of Heaven and Hell, p. 3.
 4. Gen. 3: 17-19; Job 31: 38-40.
 5. Jer. 20: 14.

intended to bring afflictions to make life miserable. For example, such ill wishes as to have hard labor,¹ to be a slave,² to be a fugitive,³ are intended to bring hardship upon life. The fields are to bring forth weeds and thistles instead of crops to this end.⁴

An uncomfortable dwelling place is often mentioned in a description of the hardships of the life of cursed one:

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man. . . for he shall be like a scrub in the desert and unable to see the coming of good; he shall dwell in the parched lands of the wilderness in an inhabited salt land."⁵ Akkadian curses contain the ill

wishes to make one's habitation by the wall of the city:

"šilli dūri lu manzāzūka askuppatu lū mūšabūka (The shade of the city wall shall be your resting place, the threshold shall be your swilling place;"⁶ "Šin bēlu rabū, ^{saharšubbā}zumursū kīma šubāti lilablissūma ina kamāt ālišu līšib (May Sin, the great lord, clothe his body with leprosy like with a garment so that he so that he dwell by the outer wall of his city;⁷ "Šin nannar ^{la tebā}šamē ellūti saharšubbā, gimir lānišu lilabbišma adi ūmi šīmātišu aī ibib u kīma sirrimi ina kamāt ālišu lirtappud (May Sin, the light of the pure heavens, cover his entire body with incurable leprosy so that he may not become clean to the end of his days, but run around like a wild ass at the outer wall of his city.⁸

1. Gen. 3:17-19; Josh. 9:22-23.

2. Gen. 9:24-26.

3. Gen. 4:10-12.

4. Gen. 3:17-19; Akkadian: "Kudurru of the time of Marduk-Nadin-Ahhe" (No. 90840 British Mus.), IV:3-5; *ibid.*, II:32-33.

5. Jer. 17:5-6.

6. CT. 15, 47, r. 26-27.

7. BBSt., No. 11, iii:2-5.

8. BBSt., No. 7, ii:16-18.

Natural calamities such as drought, storm, famine, hunger etc. are described in the curses of both groups.¹

Ill wishes in connection with political power are frequently mentioned in the curses of the related literatures. These ill wishes are due to the fact that the extra-Biblical curses frequently include kings or rulers among the objects of the curses, for example: Anum rabûm abu ilî nabû palêja melam šarrûtim lîtersû haṭṭašu lišbir šimātišu lîrur (May the great Anum, the father of the gods, who proclaimed my reign, take away from him the awe-inspiring splendor of kingship, may he break his scepter and curse his destiny);²

אם יבא מלך בין המלכים ושר צבא בין השרים
והנהיג צבא בביבלוס ויחלש את
(If there be a king among kings and a governor among governors
and an army commander up in Byblos who shall uncover this
sarcophagus, let his judicial scepter be broken, let his royal
throne be upset).⁴

Biblical curses, on the other hand, do not classify the human object according to rank or class, when the curse is directed to an indefinite object.⁵ Biblical curses treat man as man before God regardless of rank or social position by saying, "anyone" or "he who does so and so shall be cursed."

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1. Deut. 28:24, 38, 48; Lev. 26: 26; CH, XXVI: 65-69; ibid., XXVII: 9-13, 64-80: BBst., No 6, II: 41-45; ibid., 7 II: 34-35.
 2. CH, XXVI: 45-53; XXVII: 20-31, 45-50.
 3. Cf. I AB, 6: 26-29.
 4. Ahiham of Byblos (Phoen.):2.
 5. Definite or indefinite objects in the curses are dealt with in detail in the section of this study entitled is "The Objects of the Curses."

Since kings or rulers are not taken in the Biblical curses as indefinite objects, the ill wishes for the removal of kingship or ruling power are never mentioned in the Biblical curses that take an indefinite object. Therefore, the ill wishes in connection with political power are to be regarded as a characteristic of the curses in the related literatures.

B. Ill wishes intend to bring death

Wishes to bring death are the most common in the Biblical curses as well as in those of the related literatures. Since death is the end of earthly life, some regard the curse that invoke death as the greatest curse of all.¹

Various terms are employed to express the idea of bringing to an end the life of a cursed one. The forms, *לִמָּוֶת* or *לִמָּוֶת* is one of the common terms in the Biblical curses, to express the wish for death. For example: "For as the Lord lives, who delivers Israel, though it be in Jonathan My son, he shall surely die (*לִמָּוֶת*):"² "For the day you go forth, and cross the Brook Kidron, know for a certainty that you shall surely die (*לִמָּוֶת*); your blood shall be upon your own head."³ While Biblical curses employ the word *לִמָּוֶת* for the idea of extermination of life, other Semitic cognates of Hebrew *לִמָּוֶת* (as verbs) never appear in the curses of the related literatures, to render the same meaning.

1. T. Canaan, JPOS, XV, p. 275.

2. I Sam. 14:39.

3. I Kings 2:37; cf. also II Kings 1:6; Isa. 65:20; Ezek. 18:13.

סֶחַח and סֶחַח are used in the Biblical curses in the sense of consuming or putting an end to the life of the cursed one.¹ A similar idea is expressed in the Akkadian curse by using the verb *bullu* and *gamû* : Anu šarru abu ilī aggiš līruršuma napšatuš liball² (May Anu, the king, the father of the gods, angrily curse him and extinguish his life);³ ina kašušišu rabīm kīma išātīm ezzetim ša apim nišišu liqme (May (Nergal) by his great power consume his population like a raging marsh-fire).⁴

The Hebrew verb *סָחַח* 'to pluck out', and its cognates are frequently employed in the Biblical and in the extra Biblical curses. Hebrew *סָחַח* and its Akkadian, and Aramaic cognates uniformly bear the idea, to pluck out or to put an end to the life of the cursed one. The idea being that of uprooting a plant from the earth, note particularly the parallelism: *isda nasahu* and *zera laqatu* in Akk.⁵ and the Ugaritic *ns' (-nsh!)* *šrš / riš* in the Aqht Epic.⁶ In Hebrew *וַיִּסְחַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים* (God will crush you forever; He will seize you and pluck you out of your tent, and uproot you from the land of the living).⁷ The meaning of the clause, "God will pluck you out of your tent," is to be understood in the light of the clause that

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1. Jud. 9: 19-20; II Kings 1: 10; Deut. 28: 21; Ps. 59: 14.
 2. Sec von Soden, AHW, p. 121.
 3. Hinke, Kudurru, No. 5, IV : 3-4.
 4. CH, XXVIII : 29-34.
 5. See the examples in CAD, 7, p. 240.
 6. ID: 159-160.
 7. Ps. 52: 7; Cf. also Deut. 28:63.

follows: "and He will uproot you from the land of the living"

נָסַח and שָׁרַשׁ are used as synonyms here. Therefore, *נָסַח מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים* and *שָׁרַשׁ מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים* are to be regarded as a poetic repetition of the same idea. *נָסַח* and *שָׁרַשׁ* here render the meaning to terminate life or existence.

The function of *na'* in Ugaritic curses is identical with that of *נָסַח* in Biblical curses: *šršk bars al yp-ris' gly bd nsk*: (May your root not grow in the earth, in the hand of your uprooter may your head droop).¹ *šrš* "root (of a plant)" is to be understood as a figuration term for life (see above).

Akkadian *šuršum* is likewise employed to render a similar idea:

ilu bāmū'a lū rābis lemuttisū sūma --- ligamme šuršisū (May the god, My creator, be his evil demon, may he consume his roots);² *ligamme šuršisū* a figurative expression meaning to terminate the life. The verb *למח* 'to wipe out' is used in the sense of *נָסַח* in the Phoenician curses³ to render the same idea: . . . *ואח בעל שמם ואל קן ארץ*.

ואח בעל שמם ואל קן ארץ (May Ba'1 Shamem and El-the-Creator-of-the Earth . . . wipe out that ruler and that king).

Aramaic curses on the other hand employ the *נָסַח* to express the idea of terminating the life: *אלהי תימא ינסחיה*.

אלהי תימא ינסחיה (May the gods of Tema uproot him and his seed and his name from before Tema):⁴ *שהרושמי ינכ*.

שהרושמי ינכ (May Sin, Shamash, Nikkal and

1. ID: 159-160; Cf IAB, 6: 27-28.

2. Hinke, Kudurru, No. 5, IV: 26-27.

3. Azetawadda of Adana, III: 18-19; Cf. Ahiram: 2.

4. Tema: 13-15 (Cooke, p. 19f).

Nusku pluck out your name and your position from life).¹

The clauses, *ina balṭūtim lissuhšu* (May he (the god) pluck him out from among the living); *išissu lissuhū* (May they (the gods) tear out his foundation) appear frequently in the Akkadian curses: *eliš ina balṭūtim liššāšu šapliš ina eršetim eṭemmašu mē lišašmi* (May he (Šamaš) uproot him from among the living here on earth, may he make his ghost thirst for (cool) water in the netherworld there below)² *Ann Enlil u Ea ilū rabūtu iššissu lissuhū* (May Ann, Enlil and Ea, the great gods, uproot his foundation).³ *eliš ina balṭūtim* in the above example clearly indicates that *nasahu* stands for the idea, to terminate the life. The idiom, *išissu lissuhū*, is a common ill wish in the Akkadian curses along with the idiom *šumsu/zēr-(a)-šu liballiḳū/ lilqutū*.⁴ When the curse says "May gods uproot his foundation (*išidssu*)", it very likely means destruction of the foundation of his being, namely, his life itself. A similar figurative usage, to express the same idea, is rendered by the clause, *liḳamme šuršišu* (May he consume his root).⁵ *šuršum* and *išdum* are to be regarded as synonyms as far as the related ill wishes in the Akkadian curses are concerned.

1. Nereb: 9-10 (ibid., p. 186).

2. CH, XXVII: 34-40: see CAD, 4, p. 96.

3. BBst., 8, 111: 26-27; cf. ibid., 2, B: 11-15; ibid., 3, IV: 3-4, and passim in Kudurrus. For earlier examples see CAD, 7, p. 240.

4. BBst., 2, B: 15-16; ibid., 3, VI: 23; ibid., 5, III: 37 and passim in Kudurrus.

5. Hinke, Kudurru, No. 5, IV:27.

9. Lev. 17:3-4, 10; 20: 2-9, 10:23; 23:30; Num. 15:32
10. Num. 19:20.
11. Ex. 12:19.
12. Lev. 22:3.

The verbs אבד¹ and טאד² are employed in Biblical curses to express the idea of destruction of life. The verb אבד is likewise used in Aramaic curses to express the same idea:

סֶהַר וְנִכָּל וְנִשְׁכּוּ יְהִיבֵאֵשׁ אֶמְתָּתָהּ וְאַחֲרֶתָהּ תֵּאבֵד
(May Sin and Nikkal and Nusku make his death miserable and his posterity perish;³
סֶהַר וְשִׁמְשׁ וְנִכָּל וְנִשְׁכּוּ יִסְחֻוּ שְׁמֶךָ וְאַשְׁכֶּךָ מִן חַיִּין וְאִמּוֹת לָחֶה
((May Sin, Shamash, Nikkal and Nusku pluck out your name and your position from life with an evil death, slay you, and cause your seed to perish),⁴ Akkadian abātu and ḥalāqu bear similar meanings to that of Hebrew and Aramaic. While abātu is rarely used in the Akkadian curses to express destruction of life ḥalāqu is very frequently used in this way. The idiom, zēr(a)-šu/šumšu. (May the gods) destroy his seed/name, is a common ill wish in Akkadian curses.⁵

The verb כרת, in Hiphil or Niphal, is often used in Biblical curses⁶ as well as in the Mosaic law.⁷ In many cases כרת or הכרית is followed by such phrases as from its people,⁸ from the midst of his people,⁹ from the midst of his congregation,¹⁰ "from israel,"¹¹ and from before me (God).¹²

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1. Deut. 28: 63: 30: 18.
 2. Ibid., 28:45, 51, 61, 63.
 3. Agbar, Priest of the Moon-god in Nerab: 9-10 (Cooke, p. 190).
 4. Nerab : 9-11 (Ibid., p. 186).
 5. BBst., 3, VI: 23; ibid, 6, II: 40, 60 Ibid., 7, 4II: 38-39) and passion in Kudurrus.
 6. I Kings 9:7; 14:10; 21: 21; Obadia 1: 9-10; Ps. 37:22; 109:13, 15.
 7. Ex. 31:14-15; Lev. 7:21, 25-27; 17: 3-4, 8-9, 14; 19:8; 18:29; 20: 16-17; 22:3; Num. 19:20, etc.
 8. Lev. 7:21, 25-27; 17:9; 19:8.
 9. Lev. 17:3-4, 10; 20: 2-6, 18:28; 23:30: Num. 15:30
 10. Num. 19:20.
 11. Ex. 12:19.
 12. Lev. 22:3.

The formula, **נִכְרַת לְ-**, is understood by some as referring to the death penalty and by others as exclusion from the sacra of the clan and from burial in the family grave.¹

There is evidence that when **כָּרַת** appears in a description of an ill wish, it represents the idea of terminating life: "So you shall keep the sabbath, for it is to be sacred unto you; anyone desecrating it shall surely be put to death (**מוֹת יוֹמָת**); if there is anyone who does work on it, that person shall be cut off (**וְנִכְרַת**) from among his people."²

וְנִכְרַת and **יָוָת** are taken in the above law as synonyms. The word, **נִכְרַת** repeats the idea of **מוֹת יוֹמָת**. A similar use of **נִכְרַת** is seen in the Book of Ezekiel: "therefore behold, I stretch my hand over you, and will deliver you ~~for~~ a spoil to the nations, I will cut you off from the peoples, and I will cause you to perish from the lands, I will destroy you utterly; so that you know that I am the Lord."³ The verbs **כָּרַת**, **אָבַד** and **שָׁמַד** are taken here as synonyms. They have the meaning 'to annihilate or exterminate'.⁴ A synonym of the Hebrew **כָּרַת** is found in a Phoenician curse, where **קצי** "to cut off" is used in a sense similar to that of **כָּרַת** in the Biblical curse: **וַיִּסְגְּרִנִּי הָאֱלֹהִים הַקְדֵּשׁ אֶת מַעֲבַדְתִּי אֲדָרָא אֵשׁ מַשְׁלֵכַת בְּנֵי כְּקִצְתָּנִי אֵיךְ מַעֲבַדְתִּי אֲדָרָא אֵשׁ יִפְתַּח עֲלֵי זֶ**

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1. J. Skinner: The Book of Genesis (ICC) p. 294:
F. Delitzsch; Commentary on the Pentateuch, Vol.
I, p. 224.
 2. Ex. 31:14.
 3. Ezek. 25:7.
 4. Ezek. 25:8-11.
 5. Cf. II Kings 10:32.

"And may the Holy Gods deliver them up to a mighty ruler who (might) rule them in order to cut off that ruler or man who shall open this resting place.¹ The meaning of קצי "to cut off" in the above curse is further corroborated by the last lines of the same inscription

וְשִׁמְרֵם אֱלֹהִים הַקְדְּשׁ אֶל וְקִצֹּץ הַמַּלְאָכִים הַזֵּה וְהַזֵּה וְהַזֵּה וְהַזֵּה
 "and may he not take up the casket of my resting-place, lest these Holy Gods deliver them up, and cut off that ruler and those men and their seed forever".²

The expressions שִׁמְרֵם אֱלֹהִים and קצי in the Bible may be regarded as denoting grave calamities. The idiom שִׁמְרֵם אֱלֹהִים is usually takes a divine subject: "Behold I (God) will set my face against that man . . . and I will cut him off from the midst of my people;"³ "Behold I will set my face against you to bring evil (upon you) and to cut off whole of Judah".⁴ The verb קצי in the above examples gives supplementary explanation of expression שִׁמְרֵם אֱלֹהִים . Since the word קצי, in connection with Biblical curses, usually represents the idea of exterminating life, the idiom, "שִׁמְרֵם אֱלֹהִים" in the Bible may be regarded as an ill wish resulting in causing a calamity. The idiom קצי in the Bible usually takes a human subject, and the degree of ill wished for seems to be equal to that of

אֲדֹנָיִם אֱלֹהִים הַקְדְּשׁ אֶל וְקִצֹּץ הַמַּלְאָכִים הַזֵּה וְהַזֵּה וְהַזֵּה וְהַזֵּה

1. Eshmun'azar : 9-10.

2. Ibid., 21-22.

3. Ezek. 14: 8.

4. Jer. 44:11. Also Lev. 17:10; 20: 3,5; 26: 17; Jer. 21, 40.

(I will praise your name, O Lord, for it is good. For He has delivered me from every trouble; my eye has gloated over my enemies);¹ יְהוָה לִי בִּעְזָרִי וְיִשְׁׁמְרֵנִי יְהוָה לִי בִּעְזָרִי (With the

Lord for me as my helper I shall gaze in triumph on those who hate me).² When the verbs, רָאָה or סָמַךְ are used in the supplementary description of an ill wish, in connection with

וְיָמְנוּ/וְיָמְנוּ they may have the meaning of terminating the life or existence of the object against which the curse is directed.

The ill wish expressed as looking (in anger) is also found in the related literatures. Many curses in the Akkadian literatures are directed to the gods that they might look upon the objects of the curses in anger in order to destroy their life. In such case Akk. employ the verb *nekelmú(m)*³ "to look upon (in anger)", which is the antonym of *naplusum*⁴ "to look upon (with pleasure)", e. g., *amēlu šuātum Anu Enlil Ea Ninmah ilû rabûtu ezziš likkalmûma arr-[at] lā napšuri marušta lîrurûšu*, (May Anu Enli, Ea and Ninmah, the great gods, look with anger upon that man and may they curse him with an evil curse that cannot be pardoned);⁵ *amēlu šāšu ilû rabûtu mala ina šamê u eršeti šumšunu zakru aggiš lîrurûšu ilu u šarru ezziš likkelmûšu* (as for that man, may all the great gods, who exist in heaven and earth, curse him in wrath! May god and king look upon him in anger).⁶

1. Ps. 54: 8-9.

2. Ps. 118:7; Cf. also Ps. 59:11.

3.. See A. Heidel, AS. 13, pp. 74 ff.; and Cf. CAD, 4. p. 432.

4. See M. Held, JCS, 15 (1961) on II: 4 (in print).

5. BBst., 7. II: 13-15.

6. BBst., 6, II: 37-38; also *ibid.*, 3, VI: 1-2; AKA, 10: 30-35, and *passim* in curse formulas.

Moab." In my time spoke (this) but I saw my desire upon him and upon his house, while Israel perished forever,¹

The above examples from the Akkadian, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and the Mesha inscriptions uniformly indicate that the ill wish of looking in these examples may mean to terminate life or existence. Similarly it has been believed by people in different parts of the world that man's evil gaze or evil eye, can bring harmful results. This was believed by the ancient peoples,² and is also found among people in modern times. Jewish people have believed that the curse and the evil eye are the same and both bring harm upon the object against which they are directed.³ It is widely held among Orientals that food can easily be poisoned by the evil eye.⁴ Palestinians believe that the evil eye carries deadly poison that may terminate the life of a man upon whom the gaze is directed.⁵ Arabs in Morocco avoid eating food before others without sharing, because they fear an evil eye may poison their food.⁶ Arabs in general believe that the evil eye not only poisons food but also may bring evil upon a human being.⁷ Therefore, the evil look has been regarded as a silent curse. And the spoken and silent curse may have the same degree of effectiveness.⁸

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1. The Moabite Stone: (G. A. Cooke, A Textbook of North Semitic Inscriptions, p. 4-7; S. R. Driver; Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Samuel, p. LXXXV.)
 2. Frederick T. Elworthy; The Evil Eye, p. 8.
 3. Joshua Trachtenberg; Jewish Magic & Superstition, p. 45, 48.
 4. Ernest Crawley; The Mystic Rose (London, 1902), p. 161.
 5. Henry J. Van Lennep; Bible Lands, Their Customs & Manner, p. 73.
 6. E. Westermarck; Origin & Development of the Moral Ideas, Vol. I, p. 561.
 7. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 592, Vol. II, p. 354.
 8. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 563; Also, Westermarck; Wit & Wisdom of Morocco, p. 61. Note that Arabs in Morocco regard the evil eye as a regular curse.

C. Ill Wishes that Deal With The Dead Body of Sheol: That is, The State After the Physical Life is Ended.

The third category may be regarded as curses that express ill wishes against the dead bodies of the souls of those cursed ones whose physical life is ended. Some examples of the Biblical curses of the third category are:

"Him that dies of Jeroboam in the city shall dogs eat; and him that dies in the field shall the birds of the air eat. ."¹
 "And your carcasses shall become food for all the birds of the air and unto the beasts of the earth, with no one to scare them away."² "In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth will the dogs lick up your own blood, yours. . . He that dies of Ahab in the city the dogs will eat, and whoever dies in the field, the birds of the air shall eat."³

The ill wishes in the above curses are for the purpose of exhibiting the cursed state of their objects before others rather than to bring affliction to the dead bodies of the cursed ones. Commentators agree that a dead body left unburied is a shameful thing, a great insult to the dead: "The corpses of those who were slain by the foe should serve as food for the birds of prey and wild beasts . . . the greatest ignominy that could fall upon the dead."⁴; "dishonor to the dead"⁵

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1. I Kings 14:11.
 2. Deut. 28:26; Cf. also Num. 14:28-35; Lev. 26:30; Jer. 7:33; Jer. 16:4; 19:7.
 3. I Kings 21:19-24.
 4. Delitzsch; Commentary on the Pentateuch, Vol. III, p. 439.
 5. S. R. Driver The Book of Deuteronomy, I C C, p. 309.

burial, and the dead bodies being food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the field, are ill wishes that may be brought upon the cursed one in this inhabited world e. g. "above among the living" (eliš ina balṭūtim).¹ However, the terms, sheol or the underworld, Akk. šapliš ina eršetim² are understood as a location other than this visible inhabited earth.

Some of the Biblical curses that deal with *Šixṣ* or the netherworld are: "Let the wicked be put to shame, let them . . . to the netherworld (*Šixṣ*)"³ "May he incite death against them, let them go down alive into the netherworld (*Šixṣ*)"⁴ The etymology of the word *Šixṣ* is not clear. The common conception of *Šixṣ* is the abode of the dead. The ancient Hebrews thought of sheol as a realm beneath the earth.⁵ They regarded it as the place whither the souls of all men go.⁶ Whatever the exact meaning of the word "Sheol" may be, the above imprecations indicate some sort of affliction which the cursed one is to face after life on this earth is over.

Curses that deal with the netherworld are also found in the related literatures. In the great curse in his Code, Hammurabi says: "May he (Šamaš) uproot him from among the living here on earth, may he make his ghost thirst for (cool)

1. CH, XXVII: 34-35.

2. Ibid., 37-38.

3. Ps. 31:18.

4. Ps. 55:16.

5. Num. 16:30, 33; Ezek. 31:17; Amos 9:2.

6. Gen. 37:35; Ps. 31:18; Isa. 38:10.

water in the netherworld there below."¹ Note that ersetum in Akk, ars in Ugaritic, *ars* in Hebrew and ארס in Aramaic ארע may denote the netherworld.²

Ill wishes of the third category are found in the curses of modern Jewish people³ and are found in the curses of people in different parts of the world. Arabs employ curses that deal with the death: "May God burn (in hell) those who have died in your father's house;" - "May God burn the ancestors of your ancestors, the skull of your father."⁴ People of the Far East believe that a disobedient and neglectful child will be cursed not only in this life but also in the hottest hell afterwards.⁵

It has been observed that curses which deal with the state after physical death, are found in the Bible as well as in the extra-Biblical materials. These curses may be regarded as an expression of religious or superstitious ideas of the people among whom the curses are found. As some of the indirect curses indicate various deities⁶ as the objects of their religious or superstitious beliefs, so the above curses indicate their religious or superstitious beliefs about the life beyond the

1. CH, XXVII: 34-40.

2. See H. Gunkel, Schopfung und Chaos (1921), p. 18, N 1; Cf. Cassuto, The Goddess Anath, p. 22.

3. J. Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstitions, p. 59.

4. T. Canaan; "The Curse in Palestinian Folklore," J P O S, XB, p. 249.

5. William E. Griffis: Corea, the Hermit Nation (New York, 1904), p. 236.

6. A detailed explanation is given in a separate section of this study, under the title: "Indirect Curse."

1. Gen. 37:35; Ps. 38:18; Isa. 58:10; CH, XXVII: 34-40; "Ishtar's Descent to Hades," lines 1-10.

grave. In other words, the people of the Bible and of the Biblical curses believed that there would be some sort of life in the netherworld after physical death. Sheol of the underworld is regarded by both the Bible and the related literatures as a place of the dead and of darkness and torment.¹

ethical ideas of the speaker of the curse. The motives of the curses in the Bible and the related literatures are dealt with partly in the previous sections of this study. The aim of this section is to analyze various motives of the curses, both in the Bible and the related literatures, and to observe the differences in the motives of the curses in the two areas.

A. Announcement of punishments for the violations of a law or order of God.¹ Curses of this category are found almost exclusively in the Bible. Some characteristics of curses of this type are:- The speaker of the curse is usually God Himself or a man of God who speaks for God by using the phrase *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה*, (thus said the Lord); the object of the curse is always definite rather than indefinite; and the violation of the law or order of God, the primary cause of the curse, has always taken place before the utterance of the curse.

"And the Lord said to the serpent, "Because you did this (*כִּי עָשִׂיתָ*) cursed are you - - - On your belly shall you crawl, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life - - -"; and to the woman He said, "I will make very great your pain in

1. Gen. 37:35; Ps. 31:18; Isa. 38:10; CH, XXVII; 34-40; "Ishtar's Descent to Hades," lines 1-10.

CHAPTER IV

THE REASON OR MOTIVE FOR THE CURSES

There are various reasons or motives for which the curses may be uttered. The motive of a curse is an expression of the nature of the curse and of the moral or ethical ideas of the speaker of the curse. The motives of the curses in the Bible and the related literatures are dealt with partly in the previous sections of this study. The aim of this section is to analyze various motives of the curses, both in the Bible and the related literatures, and to observe the differences in the motives of the curses in the two areas.

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"And the Lord said to the serpent, "Because you did this (*לְפָשְׁךָ*) cursed are you - - - On your belly shall you crawl, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life - - -"; and to the woman He said, "I will make very great your pain in

1. Caspar Levias, "Biblical Conception of Cursing)" JE, IV, p. 389.

childbearing - - -"; "And to Adam He said, "Because you heeded ($\text{וְשָׁמַעְתָּ} \text{ } \text{קוֹל}$) your wife's voice and ate ($\text{וְאָכַלְתָּ} \text{ } \text{מִן}$) of the tree about which I commanded you saying, "You shall not eat of it", cursed be the ground because of you; in pain shall you eat of it all the days of your life - - -."¹

These three curses are spoken by God against the serpent, the woman and Adam. The curses invoked because of their violation of God's command by eating the forbidden fruit.² The berbs: וְשָׁמַעְתָּ ; וְאָכַלְתָּ , indicate that the violation took place by the time the curses were invoked. God uttered a similar curse against Cain for the killing of his brother Abel³, and against the house of Eli for the abominations of his two sons.⁴

When David murdered Uriah and took Uriah's wife, God cursed him through the prophet Nathan. God invoked a similar curse through his prophet Elihaj, when king Ahab killed Nabeth and took Nabeth's vineyard:

"And Nathan said to David: You are the man. Thus says the Lord - - - Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house; because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה): Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it

1. Gen. 3: 14-19.

2. Gen. 2: 16-17.

3. Gen. 4: 10-12.

4. I Sam. 3: 13-14.

secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, in the open light of day".¹ "And you shall speak to him saying: Thus says the Lord (כה אמר יהוה): Have you killed, and also taken possession? and you shall say to him, Thus says the Lord: In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth will the dogs lick up your own blood."²

These are examples of some of the curses that fall in the first category, the curse that is spoken as a declaration of punishment against the lawbreaker or sinful one. The curses indicate that God not only ordains law and the regulation of various spheres of life, but also that God executes punishment, especially when the violator is one of His own people. Curses of this category are similar to the punitive conclusions of laws and therefore these curses may be regarded as a manifestation of God's justice. Curses of this category are not found in the related literatures and are uniquely characteristic of the Bible.

(What B. The utterance of threats for the purpose of promoting the keeping of the laws and ordinances of God.

Since curses in this category are uttered to give a threat³ or warning for the keeping of the law, they are always related to the law in some way or another. In many cases, they are found at the end⁴ of a description of the provisions of a law or a series of laws as solemn conclusions of a legislative

1. II Sam 12: 7-12.

2. I Kings 21: 19-24; cf. also I Kings 14: 9-11; II Kings 1: 6.

3. Casper Levias, The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 389.

4. Max Joseph, The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 434; Stanley A. Cook, "The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi" (London, 1903), p. 15.

discourse. The forms of curses in the above category may be classified into two groups: the conditional curse and the typical form of curse in the Bible.¹

Conditional curses of the above category usually contain the hypothetical particle " אם if, or אם לא if not." And then " אם or אם לא " is followed by the imperfect form of the verb: אם תפיל אם (If you shall turn aside)² אם לא תשמע אם (If you do not hearken)³, etc. This form always takes an imperfect form of the verb or a participle in the hypothetical conditional clause of the curse but never takes a perfect form of the verb as do the curses that are invoked to announce the punishment of the lawbreaker. Since all the curses that announce the punishment of the sinner are invoked after the violation has actually taken place, the verbs in the clause that precedes the imprecatory conclusion are in the perfect form. For example: כי עשית (because you did this)⁴; $\text{כי שמעת קול אחיך דמי אחיך צעקים אלי מן-האדמה}$ (what have you done? Hark your brother's blood cries out to you from the ground)⁵; "Wherefore, you despised (בזית) the word of the Lord, by doing that which is evil in My sight. Uriah the Hittite you have slain (hikyta) with the sword, and his wife you have taken (לקחת) to be your wife, having slain him. (הרגת) with the sword of the Amonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house - - -"⁶

1. These forms are dealt with in a separate section of this study entitled The Formula of Curses.

2. I Kings 9: 6.

3. Mal. 2: 2.

4. Gen. 3: 14.

5. Ibid., 4:10.

6. II Sam. 12: 12. cf. also I. Sam. 3:13-14; I Kings 14: 9-11, 21: 19-24; II Kings 1: 6.

The perfect forms of the verbs in the above examples indicate that the violations had taken place by the time the curses were spoken.

On the other hand, threatening conditional curses begin with simple hypothetical antecedents and are followed by imprecatory conclusions. The verbal forms, imperfect or participle, indicate that the statements in the antecedent clauses are hypothetical and have not actually taken place. Some examples of the threatening conditional curses are:

"But if you will not listen (*לשמוע לא תשמע*) to me, nor observe (*לשמר לא תשמר*) all these commandments; if ye reject (*לדחות לא תדחות*) my statutes, or and treat (*לענות לא תענות*) my ordinances as abhorrent I will do this to you: I will inflict consumption and fever upon you as terrors, exhausting your eyes and depressing your spirits!"¹

"If you will not hearken (*לשמע לא תשמע*) unto the voice of the lord your God, by being careful to observe all his commandments and his statutes which I am commanding you today: then all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you" ²

"If you are not careful (*לשמר לא תשמר*) to observe all the provisions of this code, written in this book, by standing in awe of this glorious and awful name, the Lord your God, then the Lord shall bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendents, severe and prolonged diseases."³

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1. Lev. 26: 14-16. Each " *לא תשמע* or *לא תשמר* " is followed by the verb in the imperfect; cf. also Lev. 26: 18-20; 26: 21-26; 27-39.
 2. Deut. 28: 15-57.
 3. Ibid., 58-68; also, Mal. 2: 2; I Kings 9: 6-7.

Another form of threatening curses is found among the typical form of curse in the Bible.¹ Some of the Biblical curses in the typical form are related to the laws which thus indicates that the primary motive of the curses is to give a threat or warning to promote the keeping of the laws or ordinances of God. This form of curse begins with the word

כִּלְכִּלָּה and it is followed by the imperfect form of the verb or participle. Some examples are:

"Cursed be he who (כִּלְכִּלָּה כִּלְכִּלָּה) makes (כִּלְכִּלָּה) carved or molten image, so abominable to the Lord - - - "2

"Cursed (כִּלְכִּלָּה) be he who removes his neighbour's landmark."3

"Cursed be (כִּלְכִּלָּה) the man who heeds not (כִּלְכִּלָּה) the words of this covenant, which I enjoined your fathers when I brought them out from the land of Egypt - - - "4

These curses are to be applied only when the laws to which they are related are violated. Hebrew laws are closely related to Hebrew religion, and are designed to guide God's chosen people.⁵ The primary aim of Hebrew law is to benefit the people rather than to punish.⁶ Therefore, the above curses also may be regarded as threatening curses to promote the keeping of the law of God. As is shown in the foregoing section⁷ of this study, the curses that are uttered in order

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1. A detailed explanation of the typical form of curse is given in the section of this study entitled The Typical Formula of Curse in the Bible.
 2. Deut. 25: 15. cf.
 3. Deut. 27: 17; also Deut. 27: 16, 18-26.
 4. Jer. 11: 3-4.
 5. David Daube, Studies in Biblical Law, p. 1.
 6. Deut. 1: 18, 5; 28, 30; 6: 1-34 also S. R. Driver Deut. I.C.C. 89.
 7. This section deals with the curses that invoked as a declaration against the law breakers.

to announce punishment of the law breaker, are always invoked against someone that has actually violated the law or order of God.¹ However, the curses in Deut. 27: 15-26 are not related to any actual violation of the laws, described in the curses at the time the curses are spelled.

Threatening curses for the purpose of promoting the keeping of the law are mostly Biblical. The great curse in the Epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi is invoked in relation to the law. The curse has similar characteristics to the Biblical curses that are spoken in connection with the law. As Biblical threatening curses appear at the end of a description of a law or series of laws, so the curses of Hammurabi appear at the conclusion of the description of the code just as the Biblical curses contain the idea of a threat, so do the curses of Hammurabi, but the curse of Hammurabi never shows any idea that the curse threatens in order to promote the keeping of the law. The primary motive of this curse is to protect the law and ownership of the law, that is in the name of king Hammurabi. In other words, the hypothetical antecedent in the curse of Hammurabi never employs such a phrase as: If you (or anyone) do not do; do not hearken; do not observe, as the Biblical curses do, but employs such phrases as: If anyone changes or destroys any part of the law; if anyone effaces my name (Hammurabi's name) inscribed thereon, etc.

1. *Scripture for Sunday School, Librarian's Guide* is called a name. Dr. Ashtown's II: 12-13, etc.
2. CH. XXVI: 18-21.

1. Gen. 3: 14-19; 4: 10-12; I Sam. 3: 13-14; II Sam. 12: 10-12; Kings 21: 19-24, etc.

šumma awīlum šū <ana>awātija ša ina marêja ašturu lā iqūlma
 erētija imēšma errēt ilī lā idurma dīn adīnu uptassis awātija
 uštepēl ušurātija uttakkir šumī šaṭram ipšitma šumšu ištaṭar
 aššum errētim šinati šaniamma uštāhiz awīlum šu lu **LUGAL** lū
EN lū **ENSI** u lū awīlūtum ša šumam nabiat **Anum** rabūm **abu** ilī
 nābû palêja melam šarrūtum liṭersu **baṭṭašu** lišbir šimātišu
 līrur . . . :

If that man did not heed my words which I have written
 upon my stela; if he disregarded my curses and did not fear
 the curses of the gods, if he effaced the legal decisions
 which I have decided, has altered my words has changed my
 reliefs, effaced my name inscribed (thereon) and has written
 his own name, or because of these curses, commissioned another
 (to do so); as for that man, Whether king or lord, or governor
 or any person¹ May the great Anum, the father of the gods,
 who proclaimed my reign, take away from him the awe-inspiring
 glory of sovereignty May he break his scepter, may he curse
 his destiny"²

1. awīlūtum ša šumam nabiat, literally, a man who is
 called a name. Cf. Azitawadda III: 12-13.

2. CH, XXVI: 18-52.

C. To strengthen oaths or spoken statements.

The curse is often used in connection with oaths or covenants to insure that the content or purpose of the oaths are true and effective.¹ Curses of this category are usually in conditional form to take effect, in the case of promissary oaths or covenants, if the promise be violated; and in case of declaratory oaths, if the assertion be untrue. Sometimes oath-strengthening curses are not only uttered verbally but also are accompanied by symbolic actions² to confirm or strengthen the spoken words of the curses:

"And the priest shall have her take an oath saying to the woman:

"If no man has lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to indecent acts while married to your husband. . . and if you have defiled yourself and some man besides your husband has lain with you" - then the priest shall have the woman take the oath of execration and the priest shall say to the woman "May the Lord make you an execration and an oath among your people, by making you have miscarriages and your belly to swell; may this water that brings a curse enter your bowels, causing your belly to swell, and your thigh to fall away:, and the woman shall say: Amen, Amen."³ The above

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1. Harold M. Wiener, "Curse" The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, (New York, 1908), p. 191.
 2. J. G. Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament, p. 154; cf. also Ernest Crawley, The Mystic Rose, p. 123.
 3. Num. 5: 19-22; cf. also I Kings 8: 31-32.

oath is a declaratory oath which is strengthened by the curse. Therefore, the ills described in the curse are to be applied to the woman if she makes untrue statements in the oath.

When the curse is related to a promissory oath, it is to be applied to the violator of the oath:

"Then the elders of the community said: 'What are we to do about wives for the survivors; seeing that women are destroyed out of Benjamin? And they said: There must be heirs for the remnant of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be blotted out of Israel, and yet we cannot give them wives from our daughters. For the Israelites have sworn, saying: 'Cursed be he who gives wife to Benjamin.'"¹

Similar curses are uttered to prove one's innocence. In this case, the curses are usually in a conditional, self-imprecatory form.² Job recites a series of curses to prove his purity:

"If my step turn from the way, and my heart walk after my eyes, and if any spot stick to my hands, may I sow, but another eat; yea, and may my crops be uprooted."³

"If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan because I saw my help in the gate, may my shoulder blade drop from the shoulder, and my arm be broken from the socket."⁴

1. Judges 21: 16-18.
2. E. Westermack, Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas, vol. II, pp. 119-121, 686-687. Westermack, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. I, p. 492.
3. Job 31: 7-8.
4. Ibid., 21-22; cf. also Ibid., 19-37; 38-40.

The oath-strengthening curse is not found in the related literatures, but such a curse is commonly found among people in many parts of the world. Palestinians employ a curse to strengthen the spoken statement: "May God cut off my life short if I do not say the truth."¹ The Moroccan Arab curses to defend himself: "If I have taken it, May God bring on me emptiness."² The Chuvashes employ a curse when they swear. The one who takes the oath puts a piece of bread and a little salt in his mouth and swears: "May I be in want of these, if I say not true or if I do not keep my word."³ The Moroccan Atab invokes a similar curse by pressing a dagger against his chest: "By this poison, my God thrust it into my heart if I did so or so."⁴ Among the Masai, a person who is accused of cattle stealing and is on that account subjected to the ordeal of drinking a mixture of blood and milk, his first to swear: "O God, I drink this blood, if I have stolen the cattle this blood will kill me."⁵ In the island of Timor, the people often employ curses when they make an oath: the one who takes the oath, takes a fowl in one hand and a sword in the other and says: "Lord God, who art in heaven and on earth, look upon me! If I bear false witness to harm my fellow-men may I be punished! This day I make my oath, and if I am not speaking

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1. The Curses in Palestinian Folklore, JPOS, IX, p. 240.
 2. Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. II, p. 76; idem, The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas, Vol. II, p. 121; also pp. 686-687.
 3. J. G. Georgi: Russia, Vol. I, p. 110.
 4. The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas, Vol. II, p. 121.
 5. M. Merker, Die Masai (Berlin 1904), p. 211.

the truth, may my head be cut off like the head of this fowl!: So saying, he chops off the bird's head on a wooden block.¹

Among the people of Sumatra, when they make a peace treaty or covenant they utter a similar curse. An animal such as a pig or cow is brought between the two parties, and the beast is cut into pieces according to the number of the chiefs who attend the treaty. Each chief thereupon puts his morsel on a spit, roasts or warms it at a fire, and holding it up says: "If ever I break my oath, may I be eaten as its heart is now eaten."² So saying, he swallows the morsel. Among the Burmese, curses are often found in a peace treaty.

"May the party who breaks this agreement die even as this animal has died (killing the animal is a part of the oath), and may he be buried outside the village and his spirit never rest; may his family also die and every bad fortune attend his village."; "Now we have made peace, if any one breaks the engagement, if he does not act truly, but goes to war again and stirs up the feud again, may the spear eat his breast, the musket his bowels, the sword his head; may the dog devour him, may the hog devour him, may the stone devour him."³

The Greeks believe that an evil invocation which one utters in connection with an oath may bring real harm upon the

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1. J. G. Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament, p. 160
 2. J. G. Frazer, Op cit.,
 3. J. G. Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament, p. 161. Also a similar curse is found among the peoples in Russia, India and many other parts of the world. Cf. J. G. Georgi, Russia, Vol. I (London, 1780), p. 110; T. H. Lewin, Wild Races of South-Eastern India, (London, 1870) pp. 193, 244, sq; Memorials of Service in India, (London, 1865) p. 83. (J. C. Macpherson).

one who violates the oath.¹ People of Ceram in West New Guinea take an oath by eating food in which a sword has been placed.² People of Tenimber take an oath by invoking death and by drinking blood of their own in which a sword has been dipped.³ People of Tungue in Siberia take an oath by drinking the blood of a dog, which is then burned, and then the self-imprecation is recited: "May I burn as this dog if I break my oath."⁴ The Timorese of Melay take an oath by drinking water mixed with gunpowder and earth, saying, "May I die of sickness, by powder or the sword, if I swear falsely."⁵ Amongst the Malays, when swearing fidelity, alliance, covenant, etc., water in which daggers, spears or bullets have been dipped, is drunk, the drinker saying, "If I turn traitor, may I be eaten up by this dagger or spear."⁶ The Balinese of Malay, when giving evidence, takes in his hand a basin of water, and says, "May I perish with my whole generation if what I say is not true", and to confirm his oath he drinks the water.⁷ The Sumatran also takes an oath with a curse, "If what I now declare is truly and really so, may I be freed and cleared from my oath; if what I assert is wittingly false, may my oath be the cause of my destruction."⁸

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1. Ernest Crawley; The Mystic Rose, p. 123.
 2. J.G.F. Riedel; De sluik-en kroesharige rasson tusschen selebes en Popura, p. 129.
 3. *Ibid*, p. 284.
 4. J. Georgi; Les nations Samoyedes, p. 48.
 5. A. Featherman, Social History of the Race of Mankind, Vol. II, p. 466.
 6. W. W. Skeat; Malay Magic (London, 1900), p. 528.
 7. A. Featherman, Social History of the Race of Mankind, Vol II, p. 408.
 8. W. Marsden, The History of Sumatra (London, 1811) p. 238.

As indicated above, the oath-strengthening curse is found among people in many parts of the world. Therefore, the oath-strengthening curse may not be regarded as unique in the Bible, even though the curse is not found in the related literatures.

building and sepulchral inscriptions are for the protection of property. Similar curses are found abundantly in Akkadian literature. In particular, Kudurrus, Cylinder inscriptions and Stele or Memorial Stones of various kinds usually have curses through which the properties or monuments are to be protected. Also some Akkadian Royal inscriptions and many other miscellaneous inscriptions bear curses at the end so as to preserve the inscriptions or the monuments through the curses. Some examples of the above-mentioned curses in the related literatures are:

בְּתוֹךְ אֶרֶץ שֹׁכֵב בְּאֶרֶץ יָדָא אֵל אֵל תִּפְתָּח עֲלַי וְאֵל תִּרְגֹּזן יִיָּא
 מִתַּח תִּפְתָּח עֲלַי וְאֵל תִּרְגֹּזן אֵל יִכָּן אֶרֶץ בְּתוֹךְ תִּחַל
 אֵל אֵל יִיָּא "Only I myself lying in this coffin: do not open it, and don't disturb me. . . . But if you do open it and if you do disturb me, may you not have any seat among the living under the sun or resting place together with the shades";¹
 אֵל אֵל יִיָּא אֵל אֵל יִיָּא אֵל אֵל יִיָּא אֵל אֵל יִיָּא אֵל אֵל יִיָּא
 אֵל אֵל יִיָּא "For any man who shall open this resting place or who shall take up the coffin in which I am resting or who shall carry me away from this resting place

1. Tadmirt of Sidon (Phoen.) 5-6.

D. For the protection of property.

Some curses are invoked in order to protect properties of various kinds. Many curses of this kind are found in the related literatures. Nearly all the curses in the Phoenician and Aramaic building and sepulchral inscriptions are for the protection of property. Similar curses are found abundantly in Akkadian literature. In particular, Kudurrus, Cylinder inscriptions and Stele or Memorial Stones of various kinds usually have curses through which the properties or monuments are to be protected. Also some Akkadian Royal inscriptions and many other miscellaneous inscriptions bear curses at the end so as to preserve the inscriptions or the monuments through the curses. Some examples of the above-mentioned curses in the related literatures are:

בִּלְתִּי אֵיךְ שֶׁכָּב בְּאֵין ז אֵל אֵל תִּפְתָּח עֲלַי וְאֵל תִּרְגֵּז... וְאֵם

פִּתַח תִּפְתָּח עֲלַי וְאֵם תִּרְגֵּז אֵל יִכָּן אֵלךְ זֶרַע בְּחַיִּים תַּחַת

Only I myself lying in this coffin: do not open it, and don't disturb me . . . But if you do open it

and if you do disturb me, may you not have any seed among the living under the sun or resting place together with the

shades";¹ כֹּל אָדָם אֲשֶׁר יִפְתָּח עֲלַי מִשְׁכָּב ז אֵם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאַ אֵיךְ

חֲלַת מִשְׁכָּבִי אֵם אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹס בְּמִשְׁכָּב ז אֵל יִכָּן לֹא מִשְׁכָּב אֵת

"For any man who shall open this resting place or who shall take up the coffin in which I am resting or who shall carry me away from this resting place

1. Tabnit of Sidon (Phoen.) 5-8.

may they not have a resting place with the shades and may they not be buried in a grave."¹

The great curses in the Epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi is also for the protection of the ownership of the stela as well as for the law itself.² Other examples of the Akkadian curses for the protection of the property are: *ša šumī šaṭram ipaššitūma šumišu išaṭṭaru . . .* ^dEa ^dDamkina [*išis*]su lissuhū zērašu lilqutū "Whoever erases my inscribed name and inscribes his own name (instead), may Ea and Damkina uproot his foundation, may they gather up his seed."³

ša bīt agurrim šuāti inūma iltabbiru lā udannanūšu . . . dalassu inassahu . . . ^dšamaš bēl šamē u eršetim erretam maruštam līrursū "He who does not reinforce his temple of baked bricks when it becomes old. . . who tears out its door . . . may Šamaš, the Lord of heaven and earth, curse him with an evil curse."⁴

ša temenniġa unakkarūma temennišu išakkanu . . . Anum u Enlil lū rabiš lemuttisū ana dāriātīm "Whoever alters my foundation (Site) and sets up his foundation (Site) (instead), may Anum and Enlil be his evil demen forever."⁵

The great curses of the Bible in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 are also related to the law. The curses appear at the end of

1. Eshmun'azar of Sidon (Phoen.) 7-8.

2. See the Akk. text above, p. 70.

3. AfO, 12, p. 365: 22-23 (Takil-ilišu).

4. RA, 11, p. 92, I:26-II:25 (Kudur-Mabuk).

5. RA, 33, p. 50, III: 3-26 (Tahdunlim).

1. Max Joseph, U J E, Vol. III, p. 436; Cassin, *Leviticus*.

2. W. Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 124.

3. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Book of Judges*, p. 429.

4. Ezra 6: 11-12.

a long series of laws as a conclusion,¹ just as the great curse of Hammurabi is given in the Epilogue of the Code. However, the motive of the curses in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 is not to protect the law as a property but to give a threat or warning to promote the keeping and obeying of the law of God. The curses repeatedly say, "If you do not listen to the law of God and do not obey the commandments of God, then all the curses shall be brought upon you."

Curses whose purpose is the protection of any definite piece of property are rare in the Bible. The Book of Judges 17:2 refers to the mother of Micah who invokes a curse to protect the eleven hundred pieces of silver, but the detailed form of the curse is not given.² There is only one curse in the Bible that is employed to protect a definite property. Darius, King of Persia, invokes the curse to protect his decree concerning the protection of the temple building in Jerusalem: "Also I make a decree that any man who alters this command a beam shall be pulled out from his house and he shall be impaled upon it and his house shall be made a refuse-heap for this. The God who has caused his name to dwell there shall overthrow any king or people who shall put forth his hand to alter this or to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. . ."³ Although the curse is found in the Bible, it is hardly a representative Biblical curse. It was neither spoken by God nor by a man of God but by a gentile

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1. Max Joseph, *U J E*, Vol. III, p. 434; Casper Levias, *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, p. 389.
 2. R. Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 163; Delitzsch; *Commentary on the Book of Judges*, p. 429.
 3. Ezra 6: 11-12.

king. The curse follows the pattern of the curses in the related literatures as far as the motive and the form of the curse are concerned.

The curse in Deut. 27: 17 is certainly related to the idea of protecting property: "Cursed be he who removes his neighbour's landmark." However, this curse does not follow the pattern of curses for the protection of property in the related literatures or the curse of Darius in the Book of Ezra 6: 11-12. First of all, the curse is not spoken by the owner of a definite property. Secondly, this curse is a kind of proclamation of law¹ or a threatening curse to promote the keeping of the law of God, rather than to protect a definite property.

The nature of the curse in Deut. 27:17 becomes clear when it is considered in the light of the curses in the related literatures that deal with the field of private property and the boundary stone.

ša . . . šumī šaṭra ipaššitūma šumsu išaṭṭaru u lū ~~marēja~~ ušamsaku ana šahluṭti imannū ana mītim inaddū ina išāti eqallū ana mē inaddū ina eperi ukattamu ana bīt ekleti ašar lā a-māri ušerribūma išakkanu . . . itū rabūtu . . . ezziš likkelmūšuma ^{erreta} ~~userribuma~~ marušta aggiš līrurūšu šumsu zēršu ellassu u kim-tašu ina māti li(!)-halliqū "Whoever blots out my inscribed name and inscribes his own name (instead), or shows disregard towards my stela, or consigns it to destruction, or casts it into the high waters, or burns it in fire, or casts it into the water,

1. Casper Levias: The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 389.

or covers it with earth, or brings it and places it in a dark chamber where it cannot be seen may the great gods look upon him in anger, and furiously curse him with an evil curse, may they destroy his name, his seed, his clan and his family from the land!"¹

These follow the pattern of the property protecting curses in the related literatures. They are invoked by the owner of the property, and the motive is to protect the particular field and the boundary stone mentioned in the curse. Therefore, these curses for the protection of property show a typical characteristic of the curses in the related literatures.

Curses for protection of the property are commonly found among people in different parts of the world. According to Jacob of Edessa, a priest in Syria hangs a written curse on a tree that no one may eat the fruit.² In the South Sea Islands, it is a common practice to protect property by uttering a curse.³ Sometimes this kind of curse is expressed by use of certain symbolic materials. For example, Palestinians pile small stones of different heights to mark landmarks. And no one dares to remove such pile of stones because they regard the pile of stones as a symbol of a warning or a threat which will bring a curse against the one who

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1. LKA, pp 8-11, r. 2-35 cf. Ibid; 106 VIII: 63ff
BBst., No. 4, III: 2 ff. Ibid., 6, II 33 ff; Ibid.,
10, r. 36 ff., and *passim* in Kudurrus.
 2. W. R. Smith, "The Religion of the Semites", p. 164.
 3. R. H. Codrington, "The Melanesians" (Oxford, 1891),
p. 215.

7. H. C. Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, pp. 174-175.

removes it illegally.¹ Polynesians indicate a curse for property protection with cocoa-nut leaf plaited in a particular way.² Sometimes, a wooden image of a man or a carved post is stuck in the ground and also various kinds of symbolic materials.³ In Samoa there were various forms of taboo which formed a powerful check on stealing, especially from plantations and fruit trees, and each was known by a special name indicating the sort of curse which the owner wished would fall on the thief.⁴ Among the Washambala, the owner of the field sometimes puts a stick, wound round with a banana leaf on the road to it, believing that anybody who without permission enters the field, "will be subject to the curse of this charm."⁵

The Greeks had the custom of dedicating a lost property to a deity with a curse against those who had stolen the property.⁶ In some parts of England, clergymen had a custom to invoke curses on him who should transgress the bounds of his neighbour, and blessings on him who should regard the land marks.⁷ Thus, the protection of property is a dominant motive for the curses in the related literatures, and also in the curses among people of different parts of the world.

of vengeance. The speakers of the curses in the book of

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1. Ermete Pierotti, Customs and Traditions of Palestine, (Cambridge, 1864) pp. 95-96.
 2. Taylor White, Journal of Polynesian Society, I, p. 275.
 3. Augustus Hamilton, Maori Art, (Wellington, 1896-1901) p. 102; cf. also A. S. Thompson, Story of New Zealand, I, p. 102; William Ellis, Polynesian Researches, III, p. 116.
 4. George Turner, Nineteen Years in Polynesia (London, 1861), p. 294, sqq.
 5. S. R. Steinmetz, Rechtsverhältnisse von eingeborenen Völkern in Afrika und Ozeanien (Berlin, 1899), p. 263.
 6. W. H. D. Rouse, Greek Votive Offerings, (Cambridge, 1902), p. 339.
 7. H. C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, pp. 174-175.

E. For Vengeance.

Some curses in the Bible and the related literatures are invoked to get revenge upon enemies or wrongdoers of various kinds. Some of the imprecatory psalms in the Bible are regarded as curses of vengeance.¹

"May they be put to shame and disgraced who rejoice over my calamity; may they be clothed with shame and disgrace who magnify themselves against me."²

"Let them melt away as water that runs off; when he aims his arrows, let them be as though they were cut off. May they be as a snail which melts and passes away; Like the untimely birth of a woman, that has not seen the sun."³

"May they be put to shame and destroyed who are hostile to me; may they be covered with shame and abuse who seek to injure me."⁴

"Let not those who encompass me raise their heads; may the mischief of their own lips cover them; may burning coals fall upon them; may they be cast into the fire, into pits whence they cannot rise again!"⁵

These are some of the Biblical curses that have the idea of vengeance. The speakers of the curses in the Book of Psalms direct their curses against evildoers: to those who do

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1. C. S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms, pp. 22, 31; T. Canaan, Curses in the Palestinian Folklore, JPOS, XV, p. 292.
 2. Ps. 35:26.
 3. Ibid., 58: 8-9.
 4. Ibid., 71: 13.
 5. Ibid., 140: 10-11.

Yea, may they be put to shame and perish; that they may know that it is you alone whose name is the Lord, The Most High over all the earth."¹

Secondly, there is evidence which points to the fact that the speakers of the curses in the Book of Psalms and the Hebrews in general regarded the enemies of God as their personal enemies. In other words, the persons cursed in the Book of Psalms are cursed because they are enemies of God: "Do I not hate, them O Lord, that hate you. . . I hate them with utmost hatred; I count them as my own enemies."²

"And Jehu the son of Hanani, the seer, went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat: 'Should you help the wicked, and love those who hate the Lord?'"³

The Israelites always consider the enemies of Israel as the enemies of the God of Israel.⁴ The idea of a strong bond between God and the Israelites is made clear by the idea of divine fatherhood. In the Hebrew Bible, Israel is Jehovah's son, and Jehovah is his father who created him: "When Israel was a child, I came to love him, and from Egypt I called my son."⁵ "Do you thus requite the Lord, you foolish and senseless people. Is He not your father that created you who made you and fashioned you?"⁶ You are children of the Lord your

1. Ps. 83: 14-19; cf. also Delitzsch's comment on the passage in The Book of Psalms, Vol. II, p. 411.
2. Ps. 139: 21-22.
3. II Chr. 19:2.
4. I. Sam. 30:26; Judges 5: 31; also A. M. Rihbany, The Syrian Christ, p. 93; W. R. Smith, The Religion of the Semites, p. 36.
5. Hosea 11: 1.
6. Deut. 32: 6.

God."¹ This idea of intimate unity between God and the Israelites may be regarded as a basis of their faith that God is not only the object of their worship but also their protector and vindicator.² Therefore, when they face strong enemies to fight, they appeal to God for help, regarding their enemies as enemies of God.³ And at the same time they bear hatred against those who hate God, regarding God's enemies as their own.⁴

The concept of the unity of the people and their gods is found not only among the Hebrews but also among the other Semites. Gods are regarded not only as the objects of worship but as rulers and protectors. God becomes a primary source of their religion, and their political and social life is also conditioned by the idea of god.⁵ When Naomi, the Hebrew, said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, "Your sister-in-law has turned back to her own people and her own gods," Ruth answered, "Your people shall be my people and your God my God."⁶ Ruth's answer indicates relationship felt to exist between the Semites and their gods. According to the Moabite Stone, the Moabite god, Kemosh fights for his people and brings victory to them.⁷

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1. Deut. 14: 1.
 2. W. R. Smith, The Religion of the Semites, pp. 36-37; J.M.P. Smith, The Moral Life of the Hebrews, p. 108.
 3. Ex. 17: 8-16; I Sam. 4: 5 sqq. etc.
 4. Psalms 139: 20-22; II Chr. 19: 2.
 5. W. R. Smith, The Religion of the Semites, p. 37.
 6. Ruth 1: 15 ff.
 7. The Moabite Stone: 9-20, G. A. Cooke, North-Semitic Inscriptions, pp. 1-3.

The curse of vengeance is also found in the related literatures. In the tale of Aghat from Ugarit, Danil curses those whom he considers responsible for the death of his son Aght: qr m[ym]¹ mlk ysm² ylk m qr mym d'[lk] mḥṣ³ aqht ḡzr⁴ amd gr bt il⁵ 'nt brḥ p'lmh 'nt pdr dr,⁶ "Qiru-mayim the king curses: woe to you, o Qiru-mayim, on which rests the blood guilt of Aqht the youth . . . now . . . and forever more, from now unto all generations."⁷

yṣu gh wyṣh ylk mr rt tḡll bnr⁸ d'lk mḥṣ aqht ḡzr šršk bars al yp⁹ riš ḡly bd ns -k¹⁰ 'nt brḥ p'lmh 'nt pdr dr, "He (Danil) lifts up his voice and cries: Woe to you Marurat-taghullal-banir, on which rests the blood-guilt of Aqht the youth! May your root not grow in the earth; may your head droop in your uprooter's hand; now . . . and for evermore, from now unto all generations."¹¹

yṣu gh wyṣh ylk qrt ablm¹² d'lk mḥṣ aqht ḡzr'wr yṣtk b'1

1. This GN may be rendered "Water-Sources"; cf. Ugaritic (m)-qr "water source: in I K: 113-114, 216-217.
2. The meaning of ṣ-m is uncertain. Note, however, that no other words for "to curse" are attested in Ugaritic.
3. Mḥṣ is taken here as a noun. See Held, JAOS, 79, n. 31.
4. See Cassuto, The Goddess Anath, p. 75.
5. The meaning of this clause is still unknown.
6. For the parallelism 'lm//dr dr in Ugaritic and in Biblical Hebrew, see Cassuto, The Goddess of Anath, p. 25.
7. ID: 151-154.
8. This GN may perhaps be rendered "Blessed one Harnessed with a Yoke:." See H. L. Ginsberg, ANET², p. 154, n. 41.
9. See C. H. Gordon, UM, III, No. 1265.
10. Phoenician 𐤕𐤕 (Azit. III: 15) and Hebrew 𐤕𐤕//𐤕𐤕.
11. I D: 157-162.
12. This GN may be rendered "The City of Mourners."

lht¹ w'lmh 'nt pdr dr, "He lifts up his voice and cries:
 woe to you, City of Abelim on which rests the blood-guilt of
 aqht the youth! May Baal make you blind, from now for ever-
 more, from now unto all generations."²

These curses of Daniel bear some similarity to the
 Biblical curses that announce punishment of the violators of
 God's law and order. However, Daniel's curses here show an
 idea of vengeance rather than a solemn declaration of punish-
 ment as in the afore-mentioned Biblical curses.

Daniel is known in Ugaritic as the one who shows his
 concern with justice by judging the cause of the widows and
 fatherless as shown by the meaning of his name, dn³ and
 as indicated in the following passage:

apnk dn⁴ mt rpi a<p>hn g⁵zr mt hrnm [y] ytš⁶u ytb bap
 tgr⁴ t⁴t adrm⁵ dbgrm ydn dn almnt ytpt⁶ tpt⁶ ytm,⁶ "There
 upon Danil the Rapha-man there at Ghazir the Harnamiyy-man, is
 upright, sitting before the gate beneath a mighty tree on the
 threshing floor, judging the cause of widow adjudicating the
 case of the orphan."⁷

The idea of vengeance is seen from the context as well as

1. Cf. III AB, A: 8-9; note 'nt-p'lmh in the previous passages.

2. ID: 164-168.

3. "dn⁴l" God judges. Cf. Ginsberg ANET² p. 149, n. 1.

4. Cf. I Kings 22: 10.

5. Cf. perhaps Ezek, 7: 8,23.

6. Ps. 68: 6.

7. II D. 5: 4-8.

8. Driver, op. cit.

9. The restorations are certain: Cf. ID: 114-117, 122-127, etc.

in the curses of Daniel. When Daniel hears of the death of his son, Ahqt from the two messengers, his legs tremble, his face sweats, the joints of his loins are bent¹ because of his anger; He lifts his voice and swears to slay the slayer of his son.² The raging mood with which Daniel invoked the curses may be regarded as an attitude of vengeance rather than of solemn declaration of punishment. Secondly, Daniel's curses are directed against more than one object. He cursed the eagles and the three towns, including their inhabitants, none of which was a real cause of the death of Aqht, for it was the Maiden Anath who caused the breath of Aqht to vanish like the wind, his soul like vapor.³

Some suggest that the curses of Daniel against the Vultures are a threat⁴ lest the vultures fly over Aqht's grave and snatch away his corpse. However, the curses do not indicate any idea of a threat. The curses are invoked to Baal, and Baal fulfills the curses before the vultures do any violence: [yšu g]h wyšh [knp nšrm] b'1 ytb<r> b'1 ytb[r dny hmt] tqln th <t> p'ny ibq[kbdhm w] ahd hm it smt hm i-t 'zm abky w aqbrnh ašt bħrt ilm arš,⁵ "He lifts up his voice and cries: the vultures' wings may baal break, May Baal break the pinions of them. Let them fall down at my feet. I will split their bellies and gaze. If there be fat,

1. ID: 89-99; Cf. VAB, D: 29-32.

2. Driver, Can. myths and legends, p. 7.

3. ID: 91-93.

4. Driver, op. cit.

5. The restorations are certain: Cf. ID: 114-117, 122-127, etc.

if there be bone, I will sweep and enter it, I will lay it in the hollow of the earth-ghosts."¹

knp nšrm b'1 yṭbr b'1 ṭbr dīy hmt tqln tḥt p'nh ybq' kbdthm w [yḥd] in šmt in 'zm, "The vultures' wings Baal the breaks, Baal break the pinions of them. They do fall down at his feet. He splits their bellies and gazes, there is no fat, there is no bone."²

Daniel's curses against the vultures and the three towns, may be regarded as the curses of vengeance. These curses missed the real cause of the calamity, the Virgin Anat, who caused the death of Aqhat. And they were spoken in anger and motivated by self-centered vengeance. On the other hand, the curses of vengeance in the Book of Psalms magnify God's name and God's justice. Therefore, curses of vengeance in the Bible are to be regarded as God-centered.

A. Human Beings.

Among the various objects of curses in the Bible and related literatures, the human being is the most common object against whom the curses are directed.³ Some of the human objects are taken as definite objects and some are taken as indefinite.

1. The Definite Object.

Some curses in the Bible and in the related literatures

1. Gen. 3: 14-15 (the serpent is cursed). Vultures are cursed by Daniel in The Aqhat Epic.

2. Gen. 9: 17.

1. ID: 106-112. the woman, Adam, Cain in the Book of

2. ID: 114-117. psalms 3, 4, etc.

3. William C. Piercy, Curses, The Illustrated Biblical Dictionary, p. 191; I. S. E. Vol. II, p. 237; Encyclopedia Biblica, p. 391.

CHAPTER V

THE OBJECTS OF THE CURSES

The various aspects of the objects of the curses in the Bible and the related literatures are to be examined in this section. Human beings are commonly the objects of the curses. Animals are also cursed.¹ Inanimate things, such as the earth² and one's day of birth are cursed.³ In the case of curses directed against such inanimate objects, it is to be questioned whether the curses are really intended for the inanimate objects or for human beings who are related to them. Some curses take definite objects⁴ while many others take indefinite objects. The difference between a definite and an indefinite object will be shown below. The difference between a single object and multiple objects will also be considered.

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 2. Gen. 3: 17.
 3. Jer. 20: 14.
 4. The serpent, the woman, Adam, Cain in the Book of Genesis, chapters 3, 4, etc.
 5. William C. Piercy, Curse, The Illustrated Biblical Dictionary, p. 191: I, S, B, E, Vol. II, p. 767; Encyclopedia Biblica, p. 391.

take a definite object. The definite object in the curses, in most cases, is the one responsible for the curses being invoked directly or indirectly. The curses of the above category are mostly caused by the objects of the curses through violating the law of God or doing some thing harmful to the speakers of the curses directly or indirectly.

The woman and Adam in the Book of Genesis¹ are definite objects of the curses of God. God cursed them because they disobeyed God's command, not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.² Cain was cursed because of his killing Abel.³ Noah cursed Canaan, because Ham, the father of Canaan, had not covered his father's nakedness.⁴ God's curse was upon the King David through the prophet, Nathan, because David killed Uriah, the Hittite, and took Uriah's wife as his own.⁵ King Ahab was a definite object of God's curse, because he killed Naboth, the Jezreelite and seized Natoth's possessions.⁶ The high priest Eli and his house were cursed by God because of the iniquity of Eli's two sons and his failure to discipline them for their evil: "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the wrong-doing which he knew that his sons did bring a curse upon themselves,"⁷

1. Gen. 3: 14-15, 16, 17-19.

2. Ibid., 2: 16-17; 3: 1-6.

3. Gen. 4: 9-12.

4. Gen. 9:20-27.

5. II Samuel 12: 7-12.

6. I Kings 21: 19-24.

7. This is a *דבר* for "upon me"!

1. I Samuel 3: 13-14. Also, Joshua 9: 22-23; I Sam. 26: 19;

I Kings 2: 36-37; 14: 9-11; II Kings 1: 1-4, 15, 12, 16; 21: 23-24.

2. Numbers 31: 19-22; J. P. Smith, *The Moral Life of the Hebrews*, p. 9.

3. James Strahan, *The Book of Job*, pp. 254-263.

4. Lev. 26: 14-16; cf. also Ibid. 18-20, 21-22, 23-26, 27-29.

and he did not rebuke them. Therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the wrong-doing of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice or offering forever."¹

These are some of the Biblical curses that take definite human objects. These curses are directed against a particular person or persons because of their disobedience to God's law or their evil deeds. Therefore, they show a characteristic purpose of punishment of evil doers. And the objects are usually particular and individual rather than general or collective.

Secondly, some curses in the Bible take a definite human object, even though he is not responsible for the invocation of the curses. Curses of this category are usually hypothetical and conditional. They are uttered as a threat to promote the keeping of the law of God or in order to strengthen an oath² or a statement. In some cases, an oath of this kind is designed to prove one's innocence. Some call it the oath of clearance.³

Some examples of the hypothetical and conditional curses in the Bible that take a definite object are:

"But if you will not listen (*לשמוע*) to me, nor observe (*לשמר*) all these commandments: if you reject (*לדחות*) my statutes, and treat my ordinances as abhorrent. . I will inflict consumption and fever upon you as terrors exhausting your eyes and depressing your spirits. . . ⁴

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1. I Samuel 3: 13-14. Also, Joshua 9: 22-23; I Sam. 26: 19; I Kings 2: 36-37; 14: 9-11; II Kings 1: 1-4, 10, 12, 16; 2: 23-24.
 2. Numbers 5: 19-22; J.M.P. Smith, The Moral Life of the Hebrews, p. 9.
 3. James Strahan, The Book of Job, pp. 254-265.
 4. Lev. 26: 14-16; cf also *ibid.* 18-20, 21-22, 23-26, 27-39.

The second person plural indicated in the verbs יִשְׁמַחְכֶּם , יִשְׁמַחְכֶּם , יִשְׁמַחְכֶּם , represents the Israelites who are taken as the definite objects of the curses. "If you will not heed (יִשְׁמַחְכֶּם) the injunctions of the Lord your God, to observe all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you this day, that all the *following* curses shall come upon you and overtake you . . ."¹ The Israelites are taken here as the definite object in the second person singular, in a collective sense.

Job curses himself in order to strengthen the statements that he did not do wrong toward others. "If I lifted up my hand against the orphan, because I saw my help in the gate; may my shoulder blade drop from the shoulder and my arm be broken from the socket";² "If I have eaten its product without paying or have caused the tillers thereof to be disappointed, instead of wheat let thorns grow up and weeds instead of Barley."³

As these examples indicate, these curses are purely hypothetical and conditional.⁴ Although the curses are

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1. Deut. 28: 15-68.
 2. Job 31: 21-22.
 3. Ibid., 39-40; cf. also Job 31: 5-6-, 7-8, 9-10.
 4. Similar forms of self-imprecations are found among peoples in different parts of the world; cf. The curses in Palestinian Folklore, JPOS, SV, p. 240; J. G. Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament, p. 160; E. Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, II, p. 76; idem, The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas, II, p. 121; M. Merker, Die Masai, p. 211; E. Crawley: The Mystic Rose, p. 123; A. Featherman, Social History of the Race and Mankind, II, p. 466; W.W. Skeat, Malay Magic, p. 528.

directed against definite objects, the objects are not the reason or motive for the invocation of the curses.

Thirdly, some times the definite objects are taken as enemies or hated ones. The curse of Goliath, the Philistine, is spoken against David on the basis of enmity.¹ Balak, the son of Zipper, pointed out the Israelites as a definite object of the curse so that Balaam would curse them.² Shimei curses David from hatred or because of enmity.³

Curses in the related literatures are rarely directed against any particular or definite person.⁴ However, in the legend of King Keret, Keret curses his son with the charge that he was rebellious:

wy ʿny [k] rt t⁵ yṭbr ḥrn⁶ ybn yṭbr ḥrn rišk 'ttrt šm
b'1⁷ qdqdk⁸ tqln bgbl šntk⁹. . . "And Keret the noble answers:
May Horn break, my Son, May Horn break your head, Ashtoreth
Name of Baal your pate. May you fall . . . "10

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1. I Samuel 17: 43.
 2. Numbers 22: 5-6.
 3. II Samuel 16: 5-8.
 4. There are curses in the related literatures that take a definite object, but they are rarely directed against a definite human person. In The Descent of Istar, Eriskigal, Queen of the netherworld, curses Ašūsunamir. (CT, 15, 47, ll. 23-28); In the story of Aqhu in Ugaritic, Daniel curses three towns and the vultures for the death of his son, Aqht, (ID:106-111, 152-154, 157-162, 165-168).
 5. Cf. Hebrew יָדוֹ "noble." Sec. H. L. Ginsberg. The Legend of King Keret, p. 33.
 6. On the god Horon, see W. F. Albright, BASOR, 84 (1941), pp. 7 ff.
 7. Ashmunazar: 18; cf. Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 49.
 8. For rišk/dqdk in Ugaritic and Bib. Hebrew see Cassuto, The Goddess of Anath, p. 25.
 9. Cf. the same curse in III AB, B: 7-8 (Gordon, Text 137.)
 10. II K, 6: 54-58.

2. As an indefinite object.

Some curses in the Bible and the majority of curses in the related literatures are directed against human beings in a general or indefinite way. Nearly all the Biblical curses that have indefinite human objects are of the form of the typical curse in the Bible.¹ "Cursed is the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm . . . for he shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, unable to see the coming of good"²; "Cursed be he who makes a graven or molten image;"³ "Cursed be he who dishonors his father or mother . . ."⁴; "Cursed be he who removes his neighbour's landmark . . ."⁵. These Biblical curses, that take human beings as indefinite objects, are not directed against any particular person, but are set forth as declarations of the evil which will befall any person who violates the law of God or does the evil described in the curses.

The majority of the curses in the related literatures take indefinite objects.⁶ The curses that appear in the building and sepulchral inscriptions especially do not take any definite person as their object. These curses are to be applied to any one who destroys the monument or changes the written inscriptions of the monuments.

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1. Cf. the section in the preceding part of this study with the title: The Typical Form of Curse in the Bible.
 2. Jer. 17: 5-6; cf. also Malachi 1: 14.
 3. Deut. 27: 15.
 4. Ibid., 16.
 5. Ibid., 17. cf also Deut. 27: 18-26.
 6. Cf. curses in the Phoenician and Aramaic sepulchral and building inscriptions. And also curses in some of the Akkadian inscriptions that are written to protect property.

"Whosoever you are that should plunder this image (אֵין אֶת תְּהוֹנִי) may Sîn, Šamaš, Nikkal and Nusku tear out your name and your position out of life "1

"Whosoever you are that shall injure and plunder me (אֵין אֶת יְהוֹנָסִי) May Sîn, Nikkal and Nusku make his death miserable and may his posterity perish."2

"And any man who shall destroy this pillar, (וְגִבֹּר זֶה יִחַבֵּל) may the gods of Tēma tear him out and his seed and his name from before Tēma."3

3. As a single or multiple object.

Biblical curses are usually directed against a single person regardless of whether the object is taken as definite or indefinite. For example, the curses of God, that are directed against those who have sinned in most cases take a definite individual person as the object: viz. the serpent, the woman, Adam,⁴ Cain,⁵ King David,⁶ King Ahab,⁷ etc.

Biblical curses that take an indefinite object are directed against a single person in an indefinite way. "Cursed be he who makes the blind to go astray". . .⁸ "Cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the stranger, the orphan and the widow. . . ."9 "Cursed be the man who heeds not the words

1. Nērab (Aramaic): 5-10 (Cooke, p. 186).
2. Aqbar, Priest of the Moon god in Nērab: 8-10 (ibid., p. 190).
3. Tēma 12-15, and (ibid., p. 195), and many others.
4. Gen. 3: 14-19.
5. Gen. 4: 10-12.
6. II Sam. 12: 7-12.
7. I Kings 21: 19-24.
8. Deut. 27: 18.
9. Ibid., 27: 19.

of this covenant;"¹ "Cursed be the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm . . . For he shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, unable to see the coming of good. . ."²

Some of the Biblical curses, on the other hand, take a nation (people) or group of people or family (house) as their object. For example: The great, conditional curses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are directed against the children of Israel by using the second person singular and second person plural of the verbs in the curses." (אם לא תשמעו לי)
(if you will not listen to me); ואם לא תעשו (and you shall^{not} do)³

אם לא תשמע בקול יהוה (if you will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord) . . . אם לא תשמע לעשות את כל דברי התורה
(If you will not observe to do all the words of the law)"⁴

Joshua cursed the Gibeonites by saying: אנכי ורבים אתם
(You are cursed)"⁵ God's curses are something directed against a particular family or house; against the house of Eli the high priest;⁶ the house of King David;⁷ and the house of Jeroboam.⁸

The Israelites, the Gibeonites, the house of Eli, and others, are taken as the objects of the curses in a collective sense. They are taken as a collective unit since the people

1. Jer. 11: 3.

2. Jer. 17: 5, 6.

3. Lev. 26: 14.

4. Deut. 28: 15, 58.

5. Joshua 9: 23.

6. I Sam. 3: 13-14.

7. II Sam. 12: 10-12.

8. I Kings 14: 7-11.

in each group are united as far as the curses are concerned. Therefore, singleness of the objects may be regarded as characteristic of the Biblical curse.¹ Furthermore, this singleness of the object indicates that the Biblical curse treats men as equals before God regardless of class or personal position.

In contrast to the Biblical curses, many curses in the related literatures distinguish the class of people by taking multiple objects.

šuma awīlum šū . . . šumī šaṭram ip-šitma šumšu ištaṭar . . . awīlum šū lū LUGARL lū EN lū ENSI u lū awīlūtum ša šumam nabiat Anum rabūm abu ilī nabū palēju melam šarrūtīm līṭersū ḥaṭṭašu lišbir šīmātišu līrur, "If that man . . . erased my inscribed name (thereon) and has written his (own) name, May the great Anum, the father of the gods, who proclaimed my reign, take away (from) that man, whether king or lord or governor or any mankind that bears a name, of the awe-inspiring radiance^{of sovereignty}, may he break scepter and curse his destiny!"²

lū aklu lū tupu^{tū} tū ḥazannu . . . ana bīt ikleti ~~in~~šeribe narū šuātum . . . Anu Enlit u Ea . . . ezziš likkelmušu arrat lā pašāri tīrurūšu "Whoever brings this stela into a dark place, be he an overseer, an adjutant, or a mayor, may Anu, Enlit and Ea look upon him in anger and curse

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1. By the term Biblical curses we mean here, those curses that are invoked by God or by man of God in the Bible.
 2. CH. XXVI: 18-52.

him with a curse which cannot be undone."¹

These Akkadian curses are directed against human beings but the objects of the curses are divided into various classes of people: such as šarrum (king); bēlum (lord); ENSI (ruler); awīlum (free man); rē'u^m (shepherd); šakkanakku^m (governor); aklu^m (overseer), hazannum (mayor), etc.

A similar classification of the human objects is found in the curses of Phoenician, sepulchral and building inscriptions:

כל אמלכת וכל אדם אשר יפתח עלות משכב ז... אל יכן לס משכב
את רפאם ואל יקבר בקבר "Any ruler and any
man who shall open this resting-place . . . may they not have
a resting-place with the shades, may they not be buried in a
grave!"²

ואם יאריך במלכם ורץ ברזנס אם אדם אם שם שם יאח שם
ז "If there be a king among kings and a prince
among princes or any ordinary man who shall wipe out the name
of Azitawaddn from this gate."³

These Phoenician curses, like the afore-mentioned Akkadian ones, classify their human object according to personal rank such as king, prince, lord, governor, commander, or common man. This classification may be regarded as a characteristic of the

1. BBst., No. 5, III: 2-34, cf. *ibid.*, No. 7, I: 32 ff.; No. 8, *ibid.*: 8ff; For other references see CAD, 6, p. 165.
2. Eshmun azar of Sidon: 8, cf. *ibid.*, 10-12, 20-22.
3. Azitawadda of Adana, III: 12ff.; cf. Ahiiram of Byblos: 2.

In the Book of Judges 17: 1-3 Hama's mother uttered a curse concerning the eleven hundred pieces of silver but the passage does not give a description of the curse. Besides, according to the context the curse was uttered after the silver had been stolen, in order to restore, rather than to protect.

curses in the related literatures. It implies that the speakers of the curses are the most powerful class of people, and their curses are to be applied regardless of the power or class of the objects.

Biblical curses, on the other hand, do not distinguish the class of people but treat human beings as equal before God, and taking a human object without any description of power or social class. There is, however, one curse in the Bible that follows the above curses in the related literatures by classifying the human objects; namely the curse in Ezr. 6: 11-12.

Although the curse of Darius is found in the Bible, it is not typical of the Biblical curses so far as the form, motive and characteristic of the curse are concerned. Biblical curses are usually spoken by God or by men of God, but this curse is invoked by a gentile. Darius uttered this curse to protect his decree and the temple of Jerusalem, but there is no other example of a Biblical curse that is invoked to protect a particular piece of property¹ belonging to an individual person, as the majority of curses in the related literatures are. Therefore, its classification of human

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1. Darius' curse is the only one in the Bible that is invoked by the owner to protect a particular property. The emphasis of the curse lies on the protection of the decree of Darius although it mentions the temple in Jerusalem. In the Book of Judges 17: 1-2 Micah's mother uttered a curse concerning the eleven hundred pieces of silver, but the passage does not give a description of the curse. Besides, according to the context the curse was uttered after the silver had been stolen, in order to restore, rather than to protect.

objects may be regarded as characteristic of the curses in the related literatures. The classification of human objects is also found in Sumerian¹ and Egyptian² curses.

B. Animals.

The curses that are directed against animals are found both in the Bible and the related literatures. God cursed the serpent because of his participation in the eating of the forbidden fruit: "And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you did this, cursed be you more than all cattle and all wild beasts"³. . . . The serpent here is the cause of the curse being invoked and is taken as an independent object. This is the only curse in the Hebrew Bible that takes an animal as an independent object. Elsewhere in the Bible, animals are taken as subordinate to their owner, who is a human being and the main object of the curses.

"I will let wild beasts loose among you, that shall rob you of your children, destroy your cattle. . . ."⁴; "Cursed be the offspring of your body, and the produce of your soil, the issue of your cattle and the progeny of your flock. . . ."⁵; "Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shalt not eat any of it. . . ."⁶

1. Lipit - 1st Lawcode, Epilogue (See S.N. Kramer, ANET², p. 161).

2. See T. A. Wilson, ANET², p. 327, No. c.

3. Gen. 3: 14.

4. Lev. 26: 22. The Book of Genesis (1900), p. 29:cf.

5. Deut. 28: 18. Pentateuch I, p. 98.

6. Deut. 28:31 cf also ibid, 51. cf. parallels in

Cassuto, The Commandments of Moses, pp. 32-33.

7. This word is problematic, but cf., however, 1K: 154-155.

The animals mentioned above are to be harmed as a result of the curse. The clause אֲרֻרָה הָיְתָה לְךָ וְלַבְּרִיָּה וְלַחֲמֹלָה וְלַחֲמֹלָה "cursed be . . . the issue of your cattle and the progeny of your flock" indicates that the animals are taken as the objects of the curse. However, the animals are taken neither as the responsible for the curse nor as an independent object. They are to be cursed only when their owners, the Israelites are deserving of the punishment. Thus, the ill wishes of the curses, by which the animals are to be affected, are really directed against the Israelites and not against the animals as the primary object of the curse. Here, animals are treated as a part of the property of the Israelites and the curse against the Israelites involves the loss of this property. But the serpent in Genesis is taken as the primary object against which the curse of God was directed. The serpent is the cause of the curse, and the ill wishes in the curse are directed against the serpent to bring misery upon the serpent itself.¹

An animal as the object in the curses of the related literatures is found only in Ugaritic, in the tale of Aqht, Daniel curses the vultures in order to protect his son's grave.

wyšū gh wyšh² knp nšrm b'1 yṭbr b'1 yṭbr dḡ hmt hm t'pn
'1 qbr bny tšḥtann³ bšnth "He lifts up his voice and cries, the wings of vultures may Baal break, may Baal break the pinions of

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1. John Skinner, *The Book of Genesis* (ICC), p. 78; cf. also F. Delitzsch, *Pentateuch* I, p. 98.
 2. For this formula and its Biblical parallels see Cassuto, *The Goddess of Anath*, pp. 32-33.
 3. This word is problematic, but cf., however, IK: 154-155.

them. They fly over the grave of my son rousing him from his sleep."¹

The vultures are taken as a direct or independent object of the curse of Daniel. Daniel utters the curse in order to bring the evil fate upon the vultures, as the curse of God was directed against the serpent. The serpent in Genesis and the vultures in the Tale of Aqht, are similar insofar as they are taken as the definite, independent objects of the curses. Directing curses against animals is also found among people of modern times. Thus, Arab farmers in Morocco, sowing the roadside with corn, often pronounce curses to the effect that any animal which eats of the crops shall die.²

C. Inanimate objects.

Some curses are directed against inanimate objects, such as one's day of birth, the ground, and property of various kinds. Jeremiah curses his day of birth: "Cursed be the day on which I was born; the day on which my mother bore me - let it not be blessed."³

The day of birth in the curse of Jeremiah is taken as a direct object of the curse; and the ill wishes of the curses are clearly directed against the day. In this curse, however, it should be observed that the object is not merely the day itself but really birth that took place on that day. Since

1. ID: 148-151; cf. *ibid.*, 106-111; 122-125; 136-140.

2. E. Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, I, p. 480.

3. Jer. 20: 14.

1. Jer. 20: 17-18.

2. Gen. 3: 17-19.

3. John Skinner, *Genesis* (1895) p. 83.

4. Job 31: 39-40.

the day itself is inanimate, it cannot be a cause of the birth of of the curse. The day is cursed because the birth took place on it, and not because the day itself is evil. Therefore, the curses are directed against their birth rather than the day itself, and the day is regarded as a symbol of their birth. This is indicated by the following statement: "Because he did not let me die in the womb; so that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb. . . . Why came I out of the womb, to see trouble and sorrow, that my days might be spent in shame?"¹

The earth is cursed on account of the sin of Adam: "Cursed be the ground because of you; in pain shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you. . . ." ² The clause, אֲרִיזָה הָאֲדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרְךָ (cursed be the ground because of you) indicates the divine curse resting not on man himself, but on the earth for his sake.³ However, as the content of the curse shows, the ultimate result of the curse is to be effected on Adam, to make him labour hard with the ground to get bread. Thus, it may be understood that the curse is spoken against the ground so as to bring hardship and misery upon the man. In the hypothetical self imprecation of Job, he curses the ground to bring misery upon himself: "If I ate its product without paying, or have caused the tillers thereof to be disappointed. . . instead of wheat, let thorns grow up. And weeds instead of barley."⁴

1. Jer. 20: 17-18.

2. Gen. 3: 17-19.

3. John Skinner, Genesis (ICC), p. 83.

4. Job 31: 39-40.

These examples show an idea that the ground is taken not as an independent object of the curses, but that the curses are directed against the ground in connection with the men who are related to it in some aspect of their life.

However, there is a curse in the Bible that takes inanimate objects as independent objects of the curse. When David heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan, he curses the mountains of Gilboa where Saul and his son died: "You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain upon you, neither fields of";¹ For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, The shield of Saul, not annointed with oil."²

Ill wish in the curse is, not let the rain or dew come down upon the mountains of Gilboa that they may be dried up. Such drought upon the mountains would bring serious harm to human beings or animals who are related to the mountains. But this curse of David gives no clear indication that it is directed against those who killed Saul or against inhabitants whose livelihood depends on the mountains. Therefore, the mountains of Gilboa may be regarded as an independent object of the curse of David.

Inanimate objects are found in the curses of the related literatures. In the tale of Aqhat, Daniel curses the three towns, which might have been the scene of the murder of his

1. H. L. Ginsberg points out the similarity between the curse of David and the curse of Daniel in Ugaritic Epic of Aqht: ID. 11, 30-47. Ginsberg also suggests the words וְשָׂרַח תְּהוֹמוֹת as וְשָׂרַח תְּהוֹמוֹת in the light of the words, šr-thmtm (upsurging of the Deep) in Daniel's curse. cf. "A Ugaritic Parallel to II Sam. 1: 21" JBL, LVII, pp. 209-213.
2. II Sam. 1: 21.

son Aqhat.¹ Although the curses of Daniel are directed against the towns, their ultimate aim may be understood to be Daniel's intention to bring calamity upon the inhabitants of the towns: not only against human beings or animals, but

In the tale of Aqht we similarly find a curse directed by Daniel against the earth and fertility. This curse strikingly parallels the one uttered by Daniel in II Sam. 1: 21. When Daniel suspects that his beloved son Aqht is dead, he curses the earth as follows: šb' šnt ysrk² b'1 tnm³ rkb 'rpt⁴ bl t1 bl rbb⁵! bl šr⁶ thmtm bl tbn ql b'1⁷ "Seven years shall Baal fail, eight the Rider of the Clouds. No dew, no rain, no upsurging of the deep, no sweetness of Baal's voice!"⁸

The house is taken here as a direct object of the curses.

1. ID: 151-154 (gr mym); ibid., 157-162 (mrirt tg'-ll bnr); 164-168 (grt ablm).
2. See Gordon, UM, III, No. 1652.
3. For this numerical parallelism (x//x + 1) in Ugaritic and Bib. Hebrew, see Cassuto, Tarbiz, 13 (1942), pp. 203-205.
4. Ps. 68: 5. See Ginsberg, JBL, 62 (1943), pp. 112-113.
5. For the parallelism of רבירב // 50 in Ugaritic and Bib. Hebrew, see Cassuto, The Goddess of Anath, p. 79.
6. wšre thwmwt (!) in II Sam. 1: 21 See Ginsberg. ANET², p. 153, n. 34.
7. "The sweet voice of Baal" denotes, of course, his thundering, since he is god of rain and thunder.
8. ID: 42-46; See H. L. Ginsberg, JBL, 57 (1938), pp. 209 ff; cf. idem, JBL, 62 (1943), p. 111; Bib Arch., 8, pp. 56-57.

1. E. Westermarck, Equal and Different in Marriage, I, p. 480.
 2. T. Canaan, The Curses in Palestinian Folklore, 1903, 27 pp. 257-258.
 3. Idem, Light and Darkness in Palestinian Folklore, 1903, XI, p. 23.
 4. T. Canaan, The Palestinian Arab House, Its Architecture and Folklore (Jerusalem, 1933) p. 81.
 5. Ibid., p. 82; cf. Gen. 18: 19; I. Sam. 22: 19; Ps. 2: 5, etc.

Curses directed against property of various kinds, in order to bring calamity to the man who is related to the property, are found among various people. In Morocco, Arabs direct their curses not only against human beings or animals, but also against lifeless objects and places.¹ Among the Arabs in Palestine, curses are often directed against property, lifeless objects. The house - the tent, stronghold of the peasant - is frequently taken as the object of such curses:²

Allâh yihrib bêtak - May God ruin your house:

allâh ihidd dâr 'abûk 'as-sâsât - May God destroy

the house of your father down to the foundation

stones!³

The house is taken here as a direct object of the curses. The Palestinians direct their curses against the house, because the house is considered a very important piece of property.⁴ By losing it, a great hardship would fall upon the owner. At the same time, the Semites often regard the word "bêt" house as a synonym for the family.⁵

Palestinian Arabs often use the words, "dâr" or "bêt" instead of "ëleh" family and "hamûleh" family group. For example, dâr el-Hsênî and bet Duqmâq adjū^{lal-farah} means "The families of Hsênî and Duqmâq came to the festival"; "biddî aftah bêt", "I wish to open a house" means I intend to marry and raise

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1. E. Westermarch, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, I, p. 480.
 2. T. Canaan, The Curse in Palestinian Folklore, JPOS, XV pp. 257-258.
 3. Idem, Light and Darkness in Palestinian Folklore, JPOS, XI, p. 23.
 4. T. Canaan, The Palestinian Arab House, Its Architecture and Folklore (Jerusalem, 1933) p. 85.
 5. Ibid., p. 85; cf. Gen. 18: 19; I. Sam, 20: 1b; Is. 2: 5, etc.

a family.¹ So the curses directed against the "house" are really against the family that is related to the house, and not against the brick or stone. Arabs direct their curses against various other lifeless objects, such as oil lamps,² fields, gardens,³ and the like. But the ultimate aim of the curses, that are directed against such lifeless objects, is to bring calamity upon the men who are related to the property.

D. Forbidden objects.

The Bible indicates that certain objects are not to be cursed. Cursing God is considered a sin. Those who curse God are to be punished by death. God commands people to stone the one who curses him outside the camp.⁴ The death penalty is also prescribed for those that curse their parents.⁵ The prohibition of cursing one's parents has been regarded as absolute; a proselyte might not curse his parents who were still ^didolators, nor might one curse his parents if they were generally despised or even convicted of crime.⁶ A curse should not be directed against helpless deaf⁷ kings, the rich⁸ and rulers of the people,⁹ On the other hand, the Bible accepts

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1. Canaan, op. cit., pp. 84-85.
 2. T. Canaan, Light and Darkness in Palestinian Folklore, JPOS, XI, pp. 23-24.
 3. Idem, The Curse in Palestinian Folklore, JPOS, XV, pp. 258-259.
 4. Lev. 24: 13-23. cf. also Ex. 22:27.
 5. Lev. 20: 9; cf. also Prov. 20:20, 30:11.
 6. Max Joseph, "Curse" in Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, III, p. 434.
 7. Lev. 19: 14.
 8. Eccl. 10: 20.
 9. Ex. 22:27.

the fact that it is natural for the wronged and the weak to curse their oppressors.¹ In other words, those who have power over the weak, may be cursed when they mistreat the weak and abuse their power. This kind of prohibition does not occur with respect to the curses in the related literatures. Both sources lie in their primary function as well as in their form.

The curses are classified according to the various motives or reasons for which they are invoked. For example, some are spoken in order to announce punishment for the violation of the command of God;¹ some are uttered as a threat to promote the keeping of the law of God;² some are invoked to strengthen an oath or statement;³ some are uttered to protect property of various kinds;⁴ the majority of the curses in the related literatures are employed to protect property or communities.

These motives or reasons for the curses may be regarded as an application of the curses and not as the primary function of the curses. The primary function of the curses may be understood from the definition of a curse. A curse is a wish or declaration the purpose of which is to bring calamity upon its related object.⁵ This primary function is the same, whatever

1. Gen. 3: 14-15; 16; 17-19, etc.

2. Deut. 28; Lev. 26, etc.

3. Numbers 5: 19-22; Job 31: 5-10; 21-22, 39-40, etc.

4. Exod. 6: 11-12; Judges 17: 2, cf. the section of this study entitled "Reason or Motives of the Curses."

5. A. E. Crawley, "Cursing and Blessing," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by J. Hastings, Vol. IV, p. 367; Casper Levins, "Biblical Conception of Cursing," *J. E. B.* IV, p. 389; Max Joseph, "Curse", *U. J. E. B.* III, p. 434.

1. Prov. 11: 26 30: 10.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Curses in the Hebrew Bible and in the related literatures have some common ground. Similarities between the curses in both sources lie in their primary function as well as in their form.

The curses are classified according to the various motives or reasons for which they are invoked. For example, some are spoken in order to announce punishment for the violation of the command of God;¹ some are uttered as a threat to promote the keeping of the law of God;² some are invoked to strengthen an oath or statement;³ some are utteres to protect property of various kinds;⁴ the majority of the curses in the related literatures are employed to protect property or monuments.

These motives or reasons for the curses may be regarded as an application of the curses and not as the primary function of the curses. The primary function of the curses may be understood from the definition of a curse. A curse is a wish or declaration the purpose of which is to bring calamity upon its related object.⁵ This primary function is the same, whatever

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1. Gen. 3: 14-15, 16, 17-19, etc.
 2. Deut. 28; Lev. 26, etc.
 3. Numbers 5: 19-22; Job 31 5-10; 21-22, 39-40, etc.
 4. Ezra 6: 11-12; Judges 17: 2, cf. the section of this study entitled "Reason or Motives of the Curses."
 5. A. E. Crawley, "Cursing and Blessing," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by J. Hastings, Vol. IV, p. 367; Casper Levias, "Biblical Conception of Cursing," J.E. IV, p. 389; Max Joseph, "Curse", U J E III, p. 434.

ilum bāni qaqađija ina uzzišu libbašu lissu^h dŠamaš bēl šamē
 u eršetim erretam maruštam līrušu "May Nergal, my creator,
 angrily in his wrath tear out his "heart" (virility); may
 Šamaš, the lord of heaven and earth, curse him with an evil
 curse."¹ dEa dDamkina išissu lissu^h zērašu lilqutū, "May Ea
 (and) Damkina uproot his foundation, (and) gather up his seed."²

As the above examples indicate, nearly all the curses in the
 related literatures are directed to various deities when the
 curses are spoken by men. As in the above examples, some Bib-
 lical curses are directed to יהוה God in the form of prayer:
 "O Lord, let me not be put to shame, for I have called you:
 Let the wicked be put to shame. let them . . . in the nether-
 world;"³ "O my God make them like the whirling dust, like chaff
 before the wind."⁴ These examples of curses both from the
 Hebrew Bible and from the related literatures indicate that as
 the Hebrews regarded Jehovah as the possessor of supreme power
 who was able to bring evil upon the cursed one, so the people
 of the related literatures regarded their deities.

Another form of curse that is common to the Bible and
 related literatures is the "Direct Curse." The direct curse,⁵
 as is shown in the preceding part of this study, is a form of
 of curse that is invoked by the speaker against an object
 directly without employing any third power. The direct curse

1. RA, 11, p. 92, II: 18-25, (Kudur Maluk).

2. AfO, 12, p. 365: 31-33 (Takil-ilisu).

3. Ps. 31: 18.

4. Ibid., 83: 14.

5. The Direct Curses are studied in detail in the section
 of this study entitled "Direct Curse."

is not a kind of wish or appeal but a direct statement or declaration of the cursed state. Direct curses in the Bible are usually spoken by God or by men of God who speak as messengers of God in saying, "thus said the Lord."¹

Direct curses always take definite object and never employ the name of power of a third party. Since God is the speaker of the curse, He addresses the cursed one and does not appeal to any third party. As in these direct curses in the Bible, some curses in Akkadian and Ugaritic Myths are spoken by various Deities. The direct curses in the related literatures also never invoke any third power. Since the speakers of the curses are gods, the curses are addressed directly to the objects.²

The direct curses in the Hebrew Bible and in the related literatures indicate that the Hebrews as well as the people of the related literatures believed their God or gods were all powerful and did not need any third power to bring evil upon any object.

While the curses of both sources bear some similarities to each other, many differences can be seen between them. These various differences point to a main difference between the principal characteristic of the Biblical curses and that of the curses in the related literatures.

The majority of the curses in the Bible are God centered in many ways. For example, the great curses in Lev. 26, and

1. Direct Curses are found in Gen. 3: 14-15, 16, 17-19; I Kings 21: 19-24; II Kings 1: 3-4; I Samuel 3: 13-14, etc.
2. CT, 15, 47, 23-28 (Descent of Istar; Jensen, KB/6, p. 88). I D: 152-154, 157-162, 165-168.

in Deut. 28, are uttered for the promotion of the keeping of the law of God, namely the God-centered life. Twelve curses in Deut. 27 are spoken in order to promote the idea of solemnity in the proclamation of the law of God. Many curses in the Bible are uttered by God or by men of God against those who break God's laws or commandments.¹ In other words, the main body of Biblical curses are related to the law and commandments of God, they may be regarded as an expression of the solemnity of the law of God and God's justice in His execution of the law. The primary principle of God's legislation, as it is revealed in the *תורה*, is the idea of blessing to those who observe the law and curse or punishment to those who violate it.² Therefore, Biblical curses in general are to be regarded as a God-centered expression of His rule over His people.

On the other hand, the greater number of curses in the related literatures are invoked for the benefit and protection of the men who uttered the curses. Nearly all the curses in the north Semitic sepulchral and building inscriptions are for the protection of various monuments. Nearly all the curses in the Akkadian Boundary, Memorial, Cylinder, Door-socket Stones are for the protection of the related property. Many curses in Akkadian royal and other inscriptions including the Code of Hammurabi are also invoked to protect the inscriptions or properties. The above mentioned curses in the related litera-

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1. Gen. 3: 14-15, 16, 17-19; 4: 10-11; I Sam. 3: 13-14; I Kings 21: 19-24; 14: 9-11; II. Sam. 12: 10-12, etc.
 2. Lev. 26: 3-9, 14-39; Deut. 28: 1-14, 15, 68, etc.

tures are, in most cases, directed to various deities. However, the curses are neither originated by the gods nor related to the deities in the same way as of Biblical curses are related to Jehovah. Numerous deities are mentioned in the curses, but they are merely employed to fulfill the curses for the benefit of the men who speak them. Therefore, the main body of the curses in the related literatures are to be regarded as man-centered curses.

The classification of the human object in the curses of the related literatures is another characteristic which points to the idea that the curses are man-centered, for example: "whether king or lord, or governor or any person of any rank," (Akkadian)¹ "If there be a king among kinga and a prince among princes or any man" (Pnoen.).² This classification of the human objects points to the fact that the speakers of the curses are the most powerful of men. Many curses in the related literatures classify the objects according to the rank of personal position when the curses have human beings as their indefinite objects.

Biblical curses on the other hand treat the human object on an equal basis regardless of rank or position. The Biblical curses treat man as man before God regardless of rank or class, and put all men on the same level, apart from God who alone is all powerful. There is only one curse in the Bible that deals

1. CH, XXVI: 40-44.

2. Azitawadda of Adana, III: 12-13.

with a human object according to rank.¹ The curse is a part of the decree of Darius, the king of Persia which he made to protect his decree and the temple of Jerusalem. This curse however is hardly to be regarded as one that typifies the Biblical curses. It was neither uttered by God nor by men of God. The curse follows the pattern of the curses in the related literatures as far as the form and motive of the curse are concerned. The curse takes a classified human object as do many curses in the related literatures. And the curse was invoked in order to protect property, as the predominant number of curses in the related literatures. There is no other example of a curse in the Bible that is spoken by an owner of a definite property in order to protect this property.

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